southern voice

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 24 | WWW.SOVO.COM | ALL THE NEWS FOR YOUR *LIFE*. AND YOUR *STYLE*. | JULY 26/2001

The angry inch

John Cameron Mitchell is more than just the title character in 'Hedwig & the Angry Inch,' he's the creator of the film, and Sundance named him the festival's best new director. The film opens nationally next month.

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ATLANTA EDITION

Silence=defeat? Fulton County Commissioner Emma Darnell led an effort last week to defeat domestic partner benefits for county workers, getting little response from gays in the metro area.

Atlanta section, page 3

Organizers of the Unity Above Hate march in May say they experienced discrimination at the hands of Atlanta police while planning the event.

Atlanta section, page 5

Led by Rev. Leevahn Smith, the new Truth Center will become Atlanta's fourth Metropolitan Community Church and the first to focus specifically on outreach to black gays.

Atlanta section, page 7

IN THIS WEEK'S ATLANTA SECTION

Gay couples jump 451% in GA

ATLANTA—Some 19,288 same-sex unmarried partners are spread across every county in Georgia, from one couple in Quitman County to 3,481 households in Fulton, according to Census 2000 figures released Wednesday.

The final numbers hold good news and some surprises for activists examining the statistics.

"It certainly is the best indication we have to date of the breadth and the depth of our community's presence throughout the state of Georgia," said Harry Knox, executive director of the statewide gay political group Georgia Equality, who has examined the numbers closely.

The number of same-sex unmarried partners in Georgia jumped 451 percent from 1990, the first time the option was available on the Census, although Census officials have warned against directly comparing the two figures due to a change in counting methodology.

"You have to make yourself heard. If you don't, you're going to be stomped on," said Fulton County resident Wayne Couch, who used the "unmarried partner" option on the Census with his partner, Robbi Peterson.

Open to the Atlanta section, page 1

R.O. YOUNGBLOOD

Wayne Couch (right) and partner Robbi Peterson are among the reported 11,871 same-sex couples in metro Atlanta, according to Census figures released this week. The numbers show almost 20,000 same-sex couples across all corners of Georgia.

Going for Gay Games gold

The last Gay Games in Amsterdam in 1998 drew 14,000 participants. An equal number are expected in Sydney in 2002, but officials with the Federation of Gay Games have raised serious questions about whether the Australian city will be ready for the event.

Producers of the 2002 Gay Games in Sydney insist they can overcome financial problems, as Atlanta prepares to make final pitch for 2006 event

by LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

ATLANTA—As organizers in Atlanta and three other North American cities put the final touches on their bids to host the 2006 Gay Games, producers of the next Gay Games in Australia face concerns over whether they will be able to raise the money necessary to host the massive gay sporting event.

Officials with the Federation of Gay Games traveled to Sydney, Australia, this week to evaluate planning for the 2002 Gay Games. In early August, Federation leaders will then conduct site visits in the four cities—Atlanta, Montreal, Los Angeles and Chicago—bidding to host the 2006 games.

Their visit to Sydney comes a month after an internal Federation memo described the "serious nature" of concerns about Sydney's preparations for the games and raised the possibility of a "total forfeiture" of the event.

In a press release issued after the memo was leaked to the press, Federation officials downplayed concerns and said they are "optimistic" about Sydney's fund-raising efforts.

But financial problems are nothing new to the Gay Games: The last games, held in Amsterdam in 1998, faced financial disaster as events got underway, with the

➢ Continued on Page 14

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All the groups who collected donations in the park, Pat Gibson, Duncan Teague, Judy Smith, Raven, all the cabaret performers, Marlon Roberson, all the ASL interpreters, Michelle Dunn, Shannon Smith, William Munden, Joe Staley, Jerry Kenna, Sam's Club, Brandon, Ken Gillett and the Piedmont Park staff, Jeff Gray, Alayne Wood, Brian Frey,

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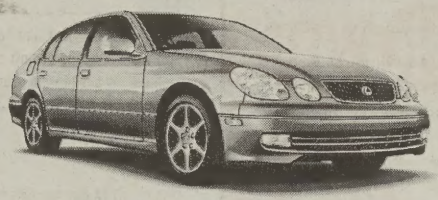

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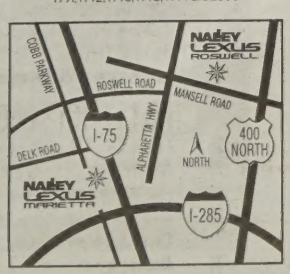

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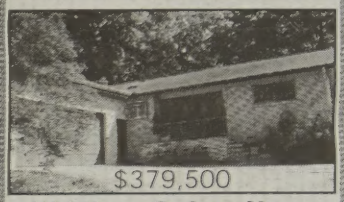

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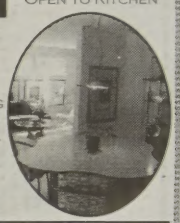

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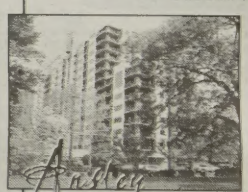

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Just when I think you've learned something—when it looks like you've decided to repair to the middle of the road and be the kind of president that you promised in your campaign—you do it again! Scuttling the treaty on global warming. Drilling for oil in Alaska rather than pursuing conservation. Threatening to veto the patients rights bill. Spending taxpayer dollars on religious schools. Appointing proteges of Jesse Helms to the federal appeals courts.

Here at *The American Prospect*, we keep watching your performance with wonder and appreciation. Even my Democratic friends are so appalled that they are starting to step up to the plate, and support bold things like living wage laws and universal health insurance. They're actually going to block some of your court nominees.

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Sincerely,

Robert Kuttner
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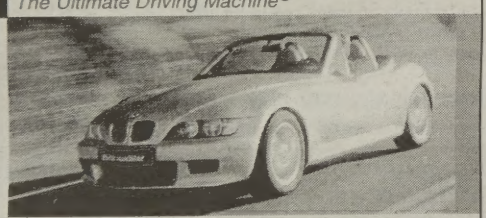

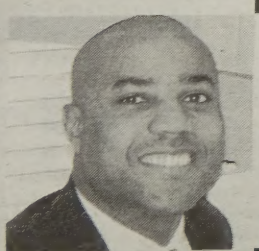

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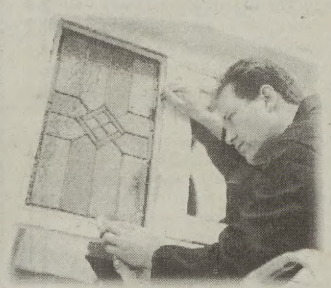

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Faith-based bill splits gay House members

GOP's Kolbe joined Republicans in defeating effort to halt anti-gay language, while Frank wanted House to 'fix' problem

by LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON—Openly gay U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) joined all but four of his House Republican colleagues last week in voting against an effort to remove anti-gay language from the faith-based initiatives bill.

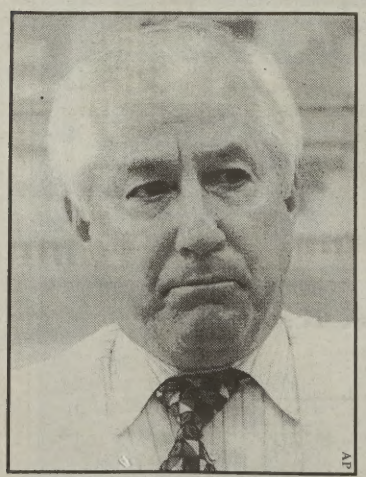
The language, part of a piece of legislation passed by the House on July 19, would allow religious charities to refuse to hire gay workers. It could affect gays wanting to work with charities that operate federally funded soup kitchens, AIDS treatment facilities and other programs aimed at helping the poor.

The motion to remove the language, introduced by Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), lost in a 234-195 vote. Democrats voted for the motion by a margin of 190-17, with three Democrats not voting. Republicans voted 217-4 against the motion, with one Republican not voting.

The House then voted 233-198 to pass HR 7, the faith-based initiatives bill proposed by President Bush, which contains the anti-gay language.

In a statement released Monday, Kolbe acknowledged that the faith-based initiatives bill approved by the House would "pre-empt" state and local gay civil rights laws by allowing religious charities, such as the Salvation Army, to engage in employment discrimination against gays.

Kolbe said he voted against the Conyers motion to delete the anti-gay language because it "went too far." He noted that the motion included a second provision that would prohibit federally funded religious charities from hiring "only employees of their own religious faith," an action he said he could not support.



Openly gay U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) joined GOP colleagues last week in voting against an effort to remove anti-gay language from President Bush's religious charities bill.

"I have been assured that my concerns about pre-emption of state and local nondiscrimination laws will be addressed in conference," Kolbe said.

He was referring to a promise by White House officials and House GOP leaders that they would deal with the issue if a similar measure also passes the Senate and a conference committee works out the differences in the two bills before it goes to the president for his signature.

The Senate has yet to take up the legislation, and gay activists say they are hopeful that chamber's version of the faith-based measure will not include the anti-gay language in the House version. A Senate-passed bill that doesn't include the anti-gay language would give pro-gay lawmakers greater leverage in persuading the House-Senate conference committee to kill the language.

Gays and small churches

During the House debate on July 19, Democratic lawmakers, including openly gay Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), argued that the House should "fix" what they called a serious problem—a clause in a bill that, for the first time, would give the federal government authority to sanction discrimination. Frank said the issue was too important to leave to the Senate when the House had the chance to address the issue.

"It is funny, when I heard this was the faith-based bill, I thought they were talking about faith in God, not faith in the Senate," Frank said during the debate.

Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), the Republican floor manager for the faith-based legislation, said small churches would likely be the main beneficiary of the legislation, which he said would provide federal funds to help such churches provide services to the poor.

He said the Conyers motion would force these small churches to hire people who are not of their same religious faith, an argument that he and other House Republicans used to oppose the Conyers motion on grounds other than its stated aim to remove anti-gay language from the faith-based bill.

Kolbe's decision to vote against the motion to delete the anti-gay language came one day after he and as many as 20 of his moderate Republican colleagues threatened to join forces with Democratic House members to vote for the motion. Capitol Hill observers viewed that threat as a mini rebellion by GOP moderates against the hard-line conservatives who make up the House Republican leadership.

The so-called insurrection surfaced when the House Rules Committee, which is controlled by the GOP leadership, rejected a proposal by Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.) to delete the anti-gay language through an amendment on the House floor.

The action by the GOP moderates prompted House Republican leaders to postpone for one day a vote on the faith-based initiatives bill. During the following 24 hours, the White House waged a massive lobbying campaign to win back the support of the moderate Republicans, according to staff members of several of the House members.

Last–minute lobbying

White House officials, among other things, urged the moderates to drop their plan to back the Democrat-sponsored motion, known as a "motion to recommit" the faith-based bill, saying President Bush would take steps to work with the Senate to "address" concerns about anti-gay discrimination through a conference committee.

The last-minute lobbying helped persuade the most moderate GOP House members to drop their support of the Conyers motion. When the vote was taken, the number of moderate Republicans who voted for the Conyers motion dwindled from what some predicted could have been as many as 20 or more to just four.

Those four were Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.), Rep. Connie Morella (R-Md.), Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa), and Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.).

"They were all under tremendous pressure to stay on the reservation," said one House Democratic staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Foley's press secretary, Kirk Fordham, said Foley made it clear to House GOP leaders that he planned to vote for the motion, and he said it's his understanding that Morella, Shays, and Leach also made their intentions known in advance.

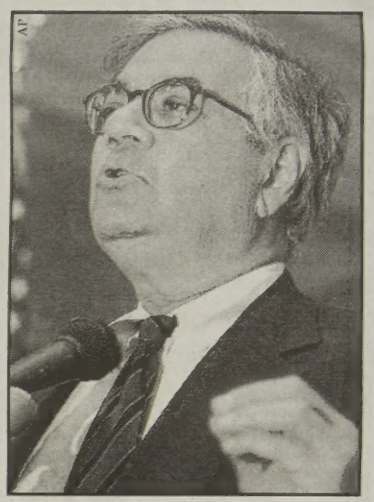
Fordham also noted that Republican House leaders scheduled a vote on the motion and the faith-based initiatives bill only after they were assured that they had the votes to defeat the motion and pass the bill.

"Everyone knew it was going to lose," Fordham said of the motion to delete the anti-gay language.

Kevin Ivers, a spokesperson for the national gay Log Cabin Republicans, disputed claims that the moderates abandoned their "rebellion" because of pressure by the White House or the House GOP leadership.

According to Ivers, the moderates were "persuaded by the facts" that the most prudent course of action was to hold off on addressing the concern about anti-gay discrimination until the Senate passes its own version of the legislation and a House-Senate conference committee has a chance to deal with the issue.

Ivers said the vote on the Conyers motion to delete the anti-gay language from the legislation was procedural in nature and, like most such actions, highly partisan. Because of this, Ivers said, the vote on the motion should not be considered a substantive vote on a gay civil rights issue.



Openly gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) called last week's failed effort to strip anti-gay language from the faith-based initiatives bill one of the most important recent gay civil rights votes in the House.

Frank and other Democrats who supported the Conyers motion disagreed, calling the vote on the Conyers motion one of the most important gay civil rights votes in the House in recent years.

"The issue in this battle was not whether faith-based institutions should receive funds for charitable work, which is widely supported, but whether as part of that program they should be allowed to flout state and local anti-bias laws," Frank said.

House votes in South

In metro Atlanta, Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) voted for the Conyers motion; Rep. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) voted against it. Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.), like Lewis a strong gay civil rights supporter, did not vote.

Clyde Baccus, McKinney's press secretary, said a family emergency prevented McKinney from voting on July 19. He said he did not know how McKinney, a longtime supporter of gay civil rights, would have voted had she been present.

Also in Georgia, Reps. Jack Kingston (R-Savannah), Mac Collins (R-Hampton), Bob Barr (R-Smyrna), Saxby Chambliss (R-Moultrie), Nathan Deal (R-Clermont), Charlie Norwood (R-Evans), and John Linder (R-Atlanta) voted against the motion.

Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-Albany) voted for the measure.

Also voting for the Conyers motion: Reps. Earl F. Hilliard (D-Birmingham), William Jefferson (D-New Orleans), Bob Clement (D-Nashville) and Harold Ford (D-Memphis).

House members voting against the measure included Reps. Joe Scarborough (R-Pensacola), David Vitter (R-Metairie), Richard Baker (D-Baton Rouge), Sonny Callahan (R-Mobile), and Robert Cramer (D-Hunstville).

Shooter at VA gay bar gets four life terms

Judge sentences Ronald Gay for shooting in Roanoke bar last September that kills one, injures three

by RHONDA SMITH

ROANOKE, Va.—A judge on Monday sentenced the 55-year-old Vietnam veteran charged with fatally shooting one man and injuring six others in a gay bar in Roanoke, Va., last September to four life prison sentences.

A Virginia law will make Ronald E. Gay eligible for parole at age 65. But Dan Caldwell, the commonwealth attorney for the City of Roanoke and the prosecutor for the case, said he does not believe the killer will ever be set free.

"In my opinion, it would be highly unlikely that Mr. Gay will ever be paroled given what he did," Caldwell said.

Last Sept. 22, Gay walked into the Backstreet Café, a small gay bar in Roanoke, ordered a beer and then fired repeatedly into the Friday night crowd.

Bar patron Danny Overstreet, a 43-year-old telephone operator, died from a chest wound. Linda Conyers, Iris Page Webb, Kathy Caldwell, John Collins, Susan Smith and Joel Tucker were wounded but survived.

Gay told police he was upset because of jokes people made over the years about his last name. He also said he was angry that three of his sons had chosen to change their surname.

The Associated Press reported this week that Gay also told authorities he had become obsessed with fulfilling "four missions." They were: "To stop corruption, to stop communism, to bring all Vietnam vets 'out of the mountains,' and to make all gay people move to San Francisco, which he thought would stop the spread of AIDS."

Circuit Judge Clifford Weckstein sentenced Gay on July 23 to life in prison for the first-degree murder of Overstreet. Gay also received life sentences for maliciously wounding Conyers, Webb and Caldwell.

Sam Garrison, an openly gay lawyer in Roanoke, said "justice was done."

"He got a very severe sentence and I certainly can't say I think that it was too light, in view of the evidence," he said. "If I were still the commonwealth's attorney and had handled this case, there's nothing I would have done differently."

In May, Gay pleaded guilty to one murder charge, three aggravated malicious wounding charges, and three malicious wounding charges. Caldwell said the prosecution dropped associated violence charges related to the other seven charges in exchange for Gay's guilty plea.

Before being sentenced this week, Gay told Weckstein it would take months to explain the shooting.

"I have a lot of things running through my head," he said.

A judge sentenced Ronald E. Gay to four life terms for killing one person and injuring three others when he opened fire in a Virginia gay bar.

Defense attorney Roger Dalton said Gay heard voices telling him to kill gay people. Gay also previously described himself in a letter to the *Roanoke Times* as a "Christian soldier working for my Lord."

The AP reported that Veterans Affairs doctors diagnosed Gay with post-traumatic stress disorder. He was divorced six times and became an alcoholic and drug abuser.

As far back as 1986, Gay expressed thoughts of violence toward gay people, according to court testimony, and believed they were trying to destroy society with AIDS.

"When you examined the facts of the case, it was clear [the shooting] was not an irresistible impulse because Mr. Gay got a gun, asked for directions [to a gay bar], and articulated his intent to kill people," Caldwell said.

The AP reported that Dalton, Gay's lawyer, argued: "Is this an evil person, or is this a sick person?"

Rev. Catherine Houchins, pastor at Metropolitan Community Church of the Blue Ridge in Roanoke, a city with about 95,000 residents, said she was relieved that the case is over.

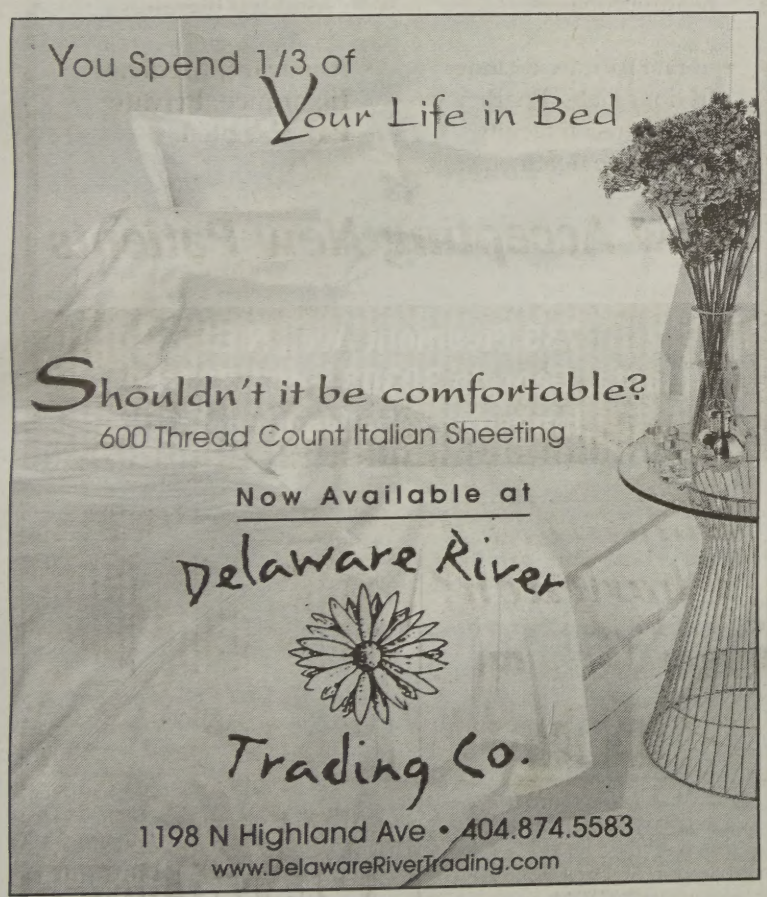
"I think it offers a chance for the community to now move on — but not forget by any means," she said. "And I think this sentence is such that it will keep Mr. Gay off the street for the rest of his life."

Caldwell said that within the next 60 to 90 days Gay most likely would be transferred from the Roanoke city jail to a penal facility reserved for older prisoners.

Like Houchins, Garrison said it would take some time before Roanoke, a city that sits at the foot of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, fully recovers from the shooting.

"For everybody in the open, active gay community, our sense of security is probably permanently diminished," he said.

Garrison also noted that the city manager quietly amended Roanoke's city personnel policies in December to prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.



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KY Baptist Homes wins suit in lesbian firing, court rules

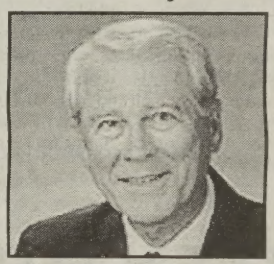
LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed on behalf of a lesbian who was fired by the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children because of her sexual orientation. The ACLU filed the lawsuit in April 2000 on behalf of Alicia Pedreira, a social worker fired from the state-funded home Oct. 23, 1998. The decision to fire her came after officials at Baptist Homes saw a photograph of Pedreira and her partner at the Kentucky State Fair. Baptist Homes has a policy that prohibits the hiring of gay employees. The lawsuit said that policy amounts to religious discrimination. "While Baptist Homes seeks to employ only persons who adhere to a behavioral code consistent with its religious mission, the absence of religious requirements leaves their focus on behavior, not religion," U.S. District Judge Charles Simpson III wrote in his decision, issued Monday. "This is an action brought under statutes that protect the religious freedom of individuals in the workplace. However, there are no facts alleged which support this contention." The ACLU said it may appeal; Baptist Home officials said they were relieved by the judge's decision.

Boy Scouts, gays reach accord in Miami-Dade flap

MIAMI—A South Florida branch of the Boy Scouts of America has agreed to give up its $125,000 in public funding, stop recruiting at public schools, and develop a training program to help its leaders deal more sensitively with gay youth as part of an agreement with a gay civil rights group made last week, the *Miami Herald* reported. The agreement, one of the first of its kind nationally, came after yearlong talks between the South Florida Council of Boy Scouts, Safeguarding American Values for Everyone (SAVE) Dade and United Way of Miami-Dade. "We don't need any more people in the community that want to fight with us, so I think there's certainly an advantage there," Jeff Hermann, an executive for the South Florida Council, told the Associated Press. Without making any concession to the national policy of excluding gays, the local Boy Scouts chapter said it will work with gay organizations to educate Scout leaders on ways to deal more sensitively with members who identify themselves as gay, the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* reported.

Judge returns Gay Pride exhibit to AS library

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—A Gay Pride exhibit that was taken down by the city's mayor was returned July 12 to the Z.J. Loussac Public Library, as ordered by a federal judge, and the city also agreed to pay $10,000 of the exhibitors' attorney's fees, the *Anchorage Daily News* reported. The Alaska Civil Liberties Union sued the city in June on behalf of organizers of the exhibit after Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch removed the exhibit, saying it was promotional, disruptive, and was interactive, since elevators in the exhibit appeared as closets that library patrons walked into and came out of. The suit said the city violated freedom of speech. U.S. District Judge James Singleton said exhibitors had showed a likelihood of success of their claims and the city should pay their attorney's fees. The order is a preliminary injunction that lasts until Oct. 15 or until a trial can be held.



Anchorage, Alaska Mayor, George Wuerch removed a Gay Pride exhibit from the city's public library June 5 after he said it was disruptive.

around the nation

IN college to stage controversial 'Corpus Christi'

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (AP)—A federal judge ruled last Friday that a state university can stage performances of a controversial play that portrays Jesus Christ as a hard-drinking gay man. A group of local residents and state lawmakers had filed a lawsuit seeking to prohibit Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne from staging Terrence McNally's *Corpus Christi* at a university theater. They argued that taxpayer money should not be used to help subsidize the production because it attacks religion. In denying a preliminary injunction, Judge William C. Lee ruled the plaintiffs had not demonstrated how the production would violate the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution requiring separation of church and state. Lee ruled the campus was not taking a position on religion by staging the play. He said the campus has allowed the theater in question to be used as a public forum in the past and that it was not involved in the selection of the play. The play is scheduled to open Aug. 10.

CO city ponders adding trans to bias policy

DENVER (AP)—City officials want to broaden Denver's anti-discrimination law to include transgender people. Should the proposal be approved, transgendered residents would be able to sue if the city cannot resolve discrimination complaints. The new proposal would round out the anti-discrimination law, giving Denver the most complete protection in Colorado, said Philip Hernandez, the executive director of the Denver Human Rights & Community Relations Agency. The city's existing ordinance protects citizens from discrimination in housing, employment, and other areas on the basis of race, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. People who believe they have been victims of discrimination can file a complaint, which the city will try to settle with mediation. The City Council will hold a public hearing on the matter Aug. 23.

—From staff and wire reports

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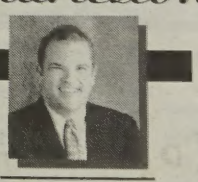

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WV teen sentenced in gay murder

Plea deal secures testimony in trial of second defendant next month

by RHONDA SMITH

FAIRMONT, W.Va.—Gay civil rights advocates expressed support this week for a Grant Town family's decision to accept a plea arrangement that makes one of their gay son's killers eligible for parole in 15 years.

David Allen Parker and Jared Wilson, both 18, were charged with first-degree murder in connection with beating Arthur "J.R." Warren Jr. on July 4, 2000, kicking and stomping him with steel-toed boots, and then running over his body with a Camaro four times.

Warren was black; Parker and Wilson are white.

Parker, who also was from Grant Town in north-central West Virginia, pleaded guilty July 19 to first-degree murder. Marion County Circuit Court Judge David Janes sentenced him to life in prison with mercy, making him eligible for parole when he is 33.

"It is our sincere hope that David Allen Parker spends the rest of his life in jail, and we're very hopeful that the parole board in West Virginia will make sure that happens," said David Smith, communications director for the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C. "At the same time, we need to respect [the Warren family's] decision."

The Associated Press reported that the plea agreement spared the victim's parents, Brenda and Arthur Warren Sr., and their two surviving children from what promised to be a grueling trial.

Parker's lawyer, Stephen Fritz, was expected to argue that his client and Warren had a sexual relationship and that this, combined with the defendant's troubled childhood, led to a long-simmering rage that finally exploded.

Parker alleged that Warren, 26, began sexually abusing him when he was 12 by giving him drugs and alcohol before most of their 30 encounters.

"The other person who could have corroborated that is not with us because of Parker's hatred," Smith said. "Regardless of whether it's true, it doesn't justify murder."

When Warren came to a vacant house Parker and Wilson were painting last summer, the teenagers reportedly took $20 from the victim and began arguing with him about the sexual gossip about the alleged relationship.

Parker had been drinking beer, huffing gasoline and snorting tranquilizers in the hours before the beating, the AP reported.

"I take full responsibility for my actions," Parker told Janes. "I do not try to blame anyone or anything else for what I have done. The amount of time I get would never replace the loss, but hopefully it will ease the loss I have caused his family."

Brenda Warren read letters and poems from her two surviving children, Audra and Michael. J.R. Warren was her oldest child and he was born in Grant Town, a rural, segregated community with 700 residents.

"There is no way to describe the pain we have endured as a family," she said. "Not only has David Parker taken the life of our son… not only did he kill him in such a vicious manner, but he went on to try to slander his name."

Warren, who was unemployed, lived at home. He was enrolled in special education courses while in school, his mother said last year, and was on the usher board at Mount Beulah Baptist Church in Grant Town.

Parker had been charged with first-degree murder and with conspiracy to commit a felony, which carried a possible sentence of five years in prison. Under the agreement with prosecutors, he pleaded guilty to the murder charge and the state of Virginia agreed to dismiss the conspiracy charge.

"If by any means I could change it, I would," Parker told Warren's family. "I hope God comforts you in your loss and eases the pain. I don't know what else to say, but I'm sorry."

As part of the plea agreement, Parker also agreed to testify against Wilson, whose trial is scheduled to begin Aug. 27 in Wheeling, W.Va.

David Allen Parker, accused in the July 2000 murder of an openly gay man in West Virginia, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in the case last week.

Wilson, of Mannington, W.Va., has said Parker began the attack on Warren and that he would also have been beaten if he had not taken part in what happened. But Smith at HRC said Wilson, apparently, was more involved in the murder than previously believed.

Special Prosecutor Stephen Kenney told the AP that he would not speculate about how Wilson's case would be handled. But he added he would oppose any attempt to have Wilson sentenced as a juvenile, which Virginia law permits.

"We really want both killers of Mr. Warren," said Kenney, the prosecutor on both cases. "We're not going to be satisfied until we get justice for both of them."

Wilson's lawyers, Frances Whiteman and Pat Wilson of Fairmont, were in the courtroom when Parker was sentenced. They refused to discuss the upcoming trial.

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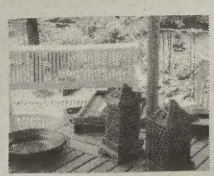
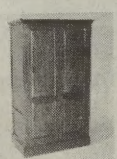

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Mayor of Moscow nixes request for Gay Pride parade

MOSCOW (AP)—The Moscow mayor's office on Monday harshly rebuffed requests for permission to hold a Gay Pride parade, saying such an event would amount to "propaganda of dissipation." With various festive parades a typical sight in Moscow during holidays, the office of Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov said it has been flooded by requests to allow a Gay Pride parade, including a proposal for a parade to be held on the Day of the City this fall, when various other groups march across the center of Moscow. Luzhkov's press service issued a stern statement saying that "the city government will not allow holding this march in Moscow on the Day of the City or on any other day, because such demonstrations outrage the majority of the capital's population, are in effect propaganda of dissipation and force upon society unacceptable norms of behavior." Homosexuality was a crime punishable by prison time in the days of the Soviet Union. Gay culture has grown in Moscow and other large cities in the past decade, but remains frowned upon.

IVAN SEKRETAREV/AP

Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov (left) rebuffed requests to hold a Gay Pride parade through the city.

British court voids transsexual's 20-year marriage

LONDON—Britain's Court of Appeal struck a blow to transsexuals July 18 by upholding the High Court's refusal to recognize a transsexual's marriage, Reuters reported. Elizabeth Bellinger, 54, underwent gender reassignment surgery in 1981, and married Michael Bellinger later that year. The three Court of Appeal judges held that Elizabeth Bellinger is not legally a woman, and therefore is ineligible to marry a male. Judge Elizabeth Butler-Sloss said the ruling will not likely be the last word on transsexual rights in Britain. "The problems will not go away and may well come again before the European Court sooner rather than later. There is no doubt that the profoundly unsatisfactory nature of the present position and the plight of transsexuals requires careful consideration," Butler-Sloss said. Bellinger said she may take her case to the House of Lords, Britain's highest court. "I am very hurt, but at the same time this goes on. We are talking about 20 years of marriage which would be non-existent if we just leave this," Bellinger said.

Malaysia denies transsexuals new gender recognition

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—The government in conservative, mostly Muslim Malaysia has rejected a request to recognize transsexual men as women, a newspaper reported July 22. Hamid Zainal Abidin, a minister in the prime minister's department, said that authorities would instead hold counseling classes to help transsexuals who face problems, the *Sunday Star* newspaper reported. "The request cannot be entertained as it is clearly against Islamic beliefs and teachings," Hamid said. A recent survey found that Malaysia has about 50,000 transsexuals. Some transsexuals said they are turned away from jobs despite being qualified because they are identified as men on identity cards and in official records. Many say they are forced to work as prostitutes.

Marriage challenge begins in B.C. Supreme Court

VANCOUVER, Canada—A legal challenge to allow same-sex couples to wed began Monday in the British Columbia Supreme Court, Canadian Press reported. Eight same-sex couples filed the British Columbia case. "It's very exciting. We're confident the Charter of Rights supports what we're asking for," Dawn Barbeau, one of the plaintiffs, told the CP. The Charter of Rights grants Canadians the right to equal treatment. Judith Bowers, one of the attorneys representing the federal government in the case, told the CP that the federal marriage law does not discriminate. "The federal government has come to court to defend the historic definition of marriage, that being an opposite sex institution," Bowers said. She added that she expects the case will need to be resolved in the Supreme Court of Canada. The government of British Columbia supported the plaintiffs' claims when they filed, but recently pulled out following the installment of a new provincial government.

Police in U.K. celebrate transgender officers

LONDON—The chief constable of a force criticized five years ago for repeated sexual discrimination appeared at a press conference July 20 to celebrate the presence of two "good, effective—and transsexual" officers in its ranks, according to the *Guardian*. David Kenworthy, head of North Yorkshire police, whose predecessor David Burke was facing disciplinary action over discrimination when he retired in 1996, sat alongside Sgt. Nicola—formerly Chris—Lamb at the pioneering get-together. "We want to be quite open about my and the force's attitude to transsexual officers. We celebrate diversity. Today is about talented people who have gone through change and yet are still giving fantastic service to North Yorkshire police," Kenworthy said. The press conference was called after concern that reporters might harass the officers, following an industrial tribunal last week in Leeds, brought against West Yorkshire police by a transsexual who claimed she was refused a job because of sexual discrimination. North Yorkshire lost three sex discrimination cases brought by women officers in the last years of Burke's administration.

—From staff and wire reports

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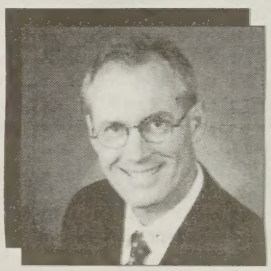
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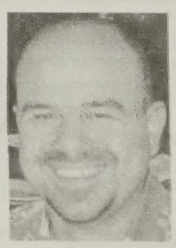
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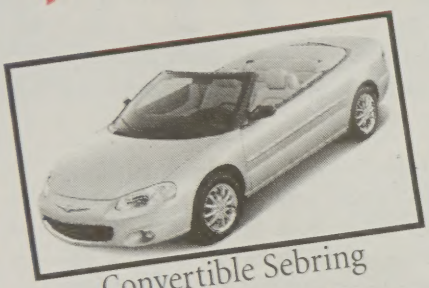

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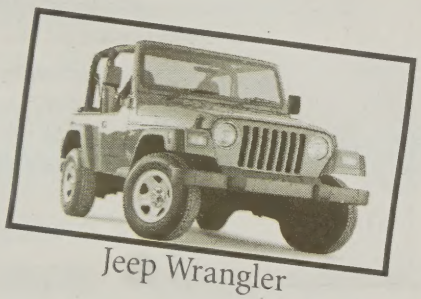

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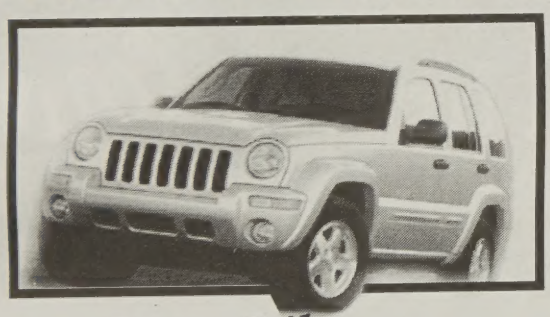

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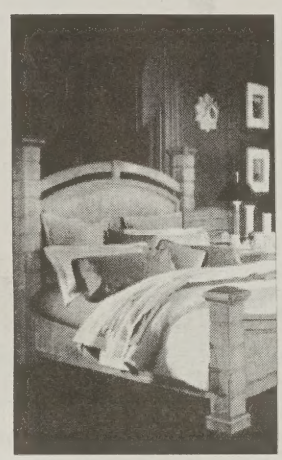

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police beat

OK to proceed with execution of Mexican national

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Gov. Frank Keating has denied clemency for convicted murderer Gerardo Valdez, a Mexican national, despite a personal appeal from Mexican President Vicente Fox. Valdez was sentenced to die by lethal injection for the 1989 shooting and beating death of Juan Barron, a gay man. Keating called the murder "a heinous hate crime." Fox and other Mexican officials have said the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations requires that nationals who are arrested have access to their home country's consulate. They also argued that the Mexican government should have had the opportunity to represent Valdez at trial, claiming this would have kept him from receiving a death sentence. Keating said in a July 20 letter to Fox that Valdez was provided an attorney fluent in Spanish and experienced in murder cases. "Mr. Valdez admitted to this brutal killing," Keating wrote. "Nor were the facts of the crime in question: Mr. Valdez drove his victim to Mr. Valdez's home where he subjected Mr. Barron to various threats before shooting him twice, slitting his throat and burning his body. Also, it was not challenged that all of this was done because Mr. Valdez viewed Mr. Barron's homosexuality with substantial distaste. That this was a heinous hate crime is not disputed."

Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating has decided to proceed with the execution of a Mexican national convicted of murdering a gay man, despite Mexican protests.

RI man disputes police account of boyfriend's attack

LINCOLN, R.I.—Robert Halle, the boyfriend of Jesse Ousley, a young man involved in an altercation with an off-duty police officer, is disputing police claims that officer Kevin Harty was attacked by Ousley, according to the *Woonsocket Call*. Lincoln Police say Ousley, drunk and suicidal following a fight with Halle, ran in front of Harty's car on Aug. 28. Ousley, 17 at the time, then jumped on the hood of Harty's car and attacked Harty when he exited the vehicle, police said. The police report was made public as the Town Council studied a $1 million claim against the city filed by Ousley, charging that Harty beat him because he is gay. The Town Council denied the claim July 17. "Harty was on top of him, punching him, strangling him. I really thought he was going to kill him," Halle said. Family Court Justice Pamela Macktaz has already found Ousley innocent of attacking Harty. Macktaz also said Harty's testimony was not credible.

Fijian fit to stand trial for gay murders, judge rules

SUVA, Fiji (AP)—A young unemployed man charged with two counts of murder in the gruesome killings of Fiji's Red Cross chief and his companion is mentally fit to plead to the charges, a magistrate ruled July 20. Apete Bauleka Kaisau, 23, entered no plea to the charges when he appeared before Magistrate Salesi Temo, and was remanded in custody until Aug. 3. He faces life imprisonment if convicted. Red Cross chief John Scott, 53, and his companion Gregory Scrivener, 39, were hacked to death in their home in the Fiji capital of Suva earlier this month. The suspect was a friend of the dead men, and had known them since he had been in high school, police said. Police Commissioner Isikia Savua said the young man had been "exploited" by the couple. The families of the deceased have said they have no faith in the Fijian justice system and denounced statements from the police linking Scott and Scrivener to drugs and pedophilia.

Convict gets life for murder of WI gay worker

GREEN BAY, Wisc. (AP)—A man who helped lure another man to a motel room, then stabbed him to death, was sentenced last week to life in prison. Paul Foss, 27, had been convicted of murder for killing Jeff Wahlen, a 45-year-old gay youth outreach worker in northeastern Wisconsin. On July 18, a judge set his parole eligibility for 50 years to coincide with the number of times Wahlen was stabbed. Police said Wahlen met Foss and Daniel Chipman outside an adult bookstore and went with them to drink beer at a motel. Once in the room, Wahlen showed them a gay pornographic magazine and complimented Chipman on his appearance. Foss then stabbed Wahlen in the back and Chipman hit Wahlen in the face with a beer bottle, a criminal complaint said.

CA marine innocent of false claim of bisexuality

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. (AP)—A Marine Corps lieutenant convicted of attempting to steal a $2.7 million payroll delivery by impersonating another officer was sentenced Friday to nine years in prison. But a charge of claiming to be bisexual in order to get discharged did not stick. First Lt. Matthew J. Tenney, 25, denied a charge that he falsely claimed to be bisexual to be discharged from the Marine Corps and the judge ruled there was not enough evidence to convict him of that offense. A Marine Corps prosecutor said during the court martial that Tenney claimed to be bisexual so he could quickly leave the service at the time of the theft before fleeing the country. FBI agents arrested Tenney Jan. 30 as he drove to the airport, where authorities said he planned to board a flight to Brazil.

—From staff and wire reports

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ENTRY CRITERIA

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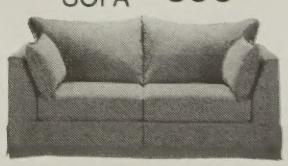

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Sydney fights perception it's not ready for 2002

➢ Continued from Page 1

director fired for mismanagement as the city of Amsterdam rushed to the rescue with a $2.5 million loan to ensure the games went on.

Faced with a history of problems, Federation leaders said they are determined not to let financial concerns overshadow the inclusive message of the Gay Games, which accepts athletes regardless of sexual orientation and of all ability levels.

"When you talk about the image of the games, the press we are getting on the financial part of it is definitely an area of concern," said Jerry Ervin, co-chair of the marketing and site selection committees for the Federation of Gay Games.

"But we want people to look at the whole big picture as we are getting the message of the Gay Games out to people all over the world," Ervin said. "While we talk about Sydney or Atlanta holding the games, there are people out there who still can't be gay or lesbian and an athlete, and there are still places in the world where it isn't safe to be gay."

Meanwhile, cities bidding to host the 2006 games are already shoring up sponsorships and supporters.

The Atlanta bid cites Coors Brewing Company and Coca-Cola among its sponsors, according to organizers, and this week the bid committee announced a source of support that is literally "major league."

"Atlanta Games Inc. Night with the Braves" will take place Aug. 8, the final day of the Federation's site visit to revue Atlanta's bid.

A minimum of 2,000 tickets to the game with the Houston Astros will be set aside for Gay Games supporters, and a welcoming presentation will be made at homeplate to Federation officials prior to the first pitch. The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus will perform the national anthem before the game.

The "ground-breaking" event "is a great preview of what's in store for us all during the Gay Games and an opportunity to show how much we want to host them in 2006," said Margie Archer, co-chair of Atlanta Games Inc., organizers of Atlanta's bid.

Upheaval in Sydney

The Gay Games, held every four years, currently attract more athletes than the Olympics, with 14,000 expected for the upcoming games in Sydney.

But with less than 18 months to go before the 2002 games, scheduled for Nov. 2-9, some officials with the Federation of Gay Games—which selects cities to host the games—appear to be seriously questioning Sydney's ability to go forward with the event.

In a memo dated June 27 and leaked to the gay sports Web site Outsports.com, six members of the Federation executive committee wrote that the upcoming visit to Sydney would be "a watershed" in determining whether Gay Games producers Sydney 2002 Ltd. would require "remedial action" including "a scaling down of all the Gay Games activities," "total forfeiture of the Gay Games" or "moving the Gay Games to another city for 2002."

Sydney officials quickly denounced the memo, while Federation leaders claimed it was based on concerns about the old leadership of Sydney 2002, which recently appointed a new chief executive officer, new board co-chairs and several new board members.

"We think they're now moving in the direction to get the job done," Federation Co-president Bill Wassmer said in a press release.

Sydney 2002 officials remained upset about the memo this week, on the eve of the visit by Federation members.

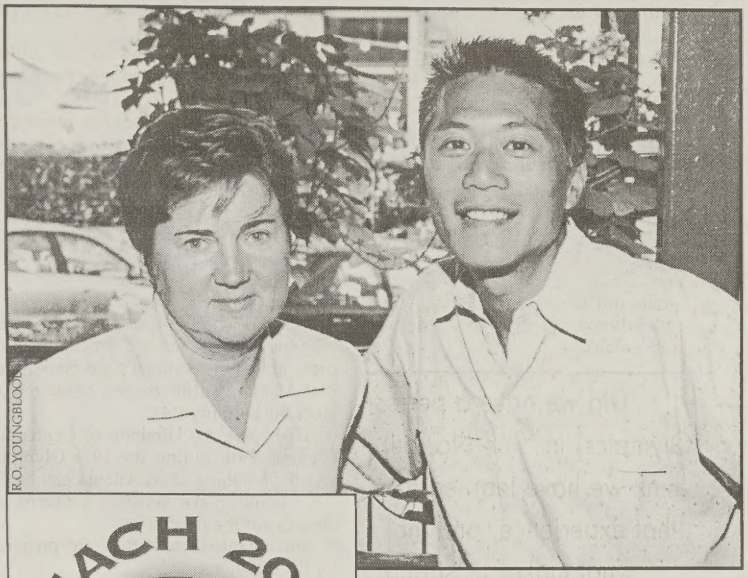
The memo "had quite a number of inaccuracies and it is unfortunate that it was sent out originally with these inaccuracies in it," Stuart Borrie, sports director for Sydney 2002, said in an e-mail interview Tuesday. The city "will be ready to host the games next year," he said.

Although the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported July 16 that the Gay Games have been unable to announce a principal sponsor, Borrie said current sponsors include Gay.com, Aussie Bodies, Qantas, American Airlines, and the cities of Sydney and South Sydney.

Borrie declined to name the amounts of the sponsorships, but said the "total so far is reaching 30 percent of expected" and fund-raising is now a major focus of event organizers.

"As an event approaches and there is more detailed planning and publicity, sponsors see greater value in the relationship," he said. "In 2000, no corporation in Australia could see beyond the Olympics, which consumed corporate Australia. We expect increasing interest in the event towards the end of this year."

The Federation's visit to Sydney ends Saturday, and a joint statement from Federation officials and Sydney organizers is expected then. Meanwhile, registration for the 2002 games continues, with an Oct. 31 deadline for early registration.



R.O. YOUNGBLOOD

Margie Archer and Ray Hom, co-chairs of Atlanta's bid for the 2006 Gay Games, say the city is the 'perfect stage' for the one million spectators they predict will attend if the games are held here.

Gay Games go South?

Sydney's Gay Games will be the first time the event has been held in the Southern hemisphere, and Atlanta organizers are hoping to bring the Gay Games to the American South for the first time in 2006.

The first Gay Games were held in San Francisco in 1982. Subsequent Gay Games took place in San Francisco in 1986, Vancouver in 1990, New York City in 1994 and Amsterdam in 1998.

"This region is the only region in North America that the Games haven't been held," said Ray Hom, co-chair of the Atlanta bid with Archer.

Atlanta bid organizers predict 1 million people will attend Gay Games sports and cultural events—the same number as attended in New York City, the last time the games were held in North America.

They also estimated the games will cost $15.5 million to produce, and bring in a whopping $500 million in "economic impact" for the region—$150 million higher than the $350 million that the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce calculated the 1998 Gay Games brought in for that city.

The $500 million figure comes from convention industry estimates of the amount an average visitor spends in the city on food, lodging and other necessities, along with additional factors such as taxes on airline tickets, according to Cindy Abel, public relations coordinator for the Atlanta bid.

Given the revenue potential involved, it isn't surprising that the Atlanta Gay Games bid has won support from a variety of city and business leaders, including the Atlanta Sports Council, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau and Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, who will host a breakfast for Federation officials on Aug. 6 during their Atlanta site visit.

But the impact of having the Gay Games here would reach far beyond money, organizers said.

"Think about the population that the games will reach in the South and Southeast including Texas," Hom said. "The games are another vehicle to educating and informing others in the process of changing the perception of GLBT [people]."

That effect will have been achieved even if Atlanta isn't successful in winning the 2006 Gay Games, Archer said.

"If this ends tomorrow, I think what [we] have done is open up this communi-

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City, business leaders back ATL bid for Gay Games

➢ Continued from Page 14

ty," Archer said. "For example, we got Major League Baseball to open the doors, and that isn't limited to this community or the Southeast—it's the country."

Making the case for Atlanta

Still, while Atlanta Games officials are quick to say their $300,000 budget for producing the bid will not have been wasted if Atlanta doesn't win, they also say they are very optimistic that the city will come out on top on Oct. 25, when the Federation announces who will host the 2006 games.

> 'Did we have a perfect [Olympics] in '96? No, but I think we have learned from that experience, and that's what makes us strong.'
> —Margie Archer

Ervin, site selection co-chair for the Federation, said the Aug. 6-9 visit by two members of the committee will be "quantitative" not "qualitative"—members will be focused on verifying the information cities provided in their extensive bid books, "down to the number of bathrooms at the swimming venue," not "whether it is a pretty city."

But Archer and Hom said the site visit is also Atlanta's chance to shine.

"This is about showing the Federation that Atlanta is the best place for the games," Archer said. "We believe we have the perfect stage here."

But the other bid cities are also touting their strengths—and what they perceive as Atlanta's weaknesses.

Shamey Cramer, executive director of Los Angeles 2006, said that as the only bid city on the Pacific Rim, the city is best poised "to capitalize on the achievements of Sydney and the Asian market."

Los Angeles also offers a huge media market, because the "metropolitan area of LA is equivalent to Chicago, Montreal and Atlanta combined," he said.

Officials with the Chicago and Montreal bids could not be reached for comment by press time, but Montreal's bid book noted that Atlanta had the highest crime rate of all of the bidding cities.

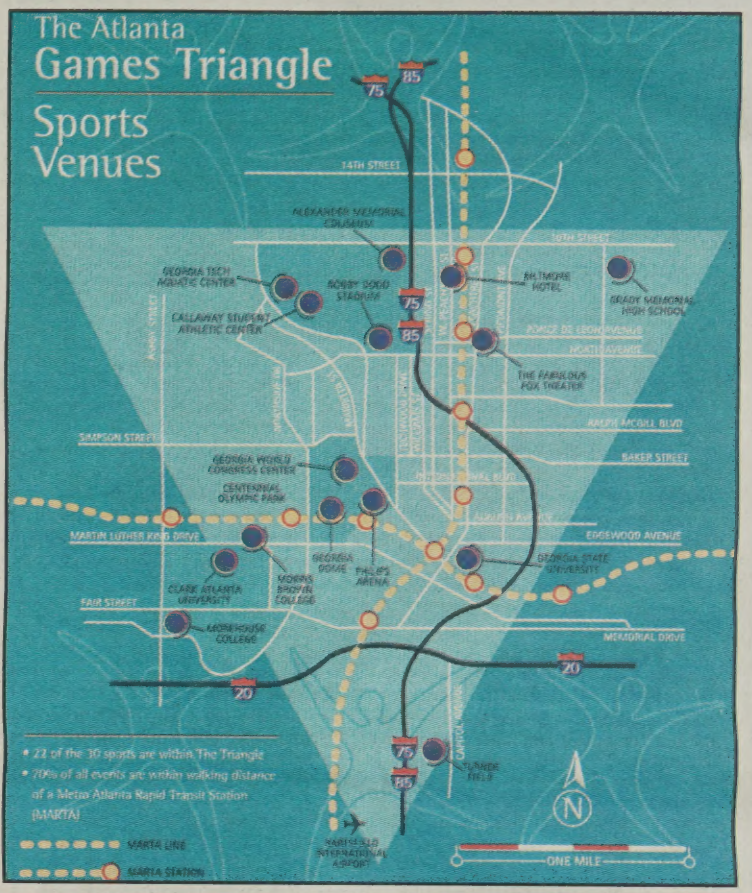
That, plus the bombing of Centennial Olympic Park during the 1996 Olympics and the bombing of an Atlanta gay bar in 1997, could make security concerns an obstacle for the Atlanta bid.

But organizers said they are prepared for the questions.

"We believe that this question will arise, and we think that this will be a benefit to our bid versus an obstacle," Hom said. "We welcome the questions and concerns related to this situation. We've done our research."

The experience of dealing with the past bombings actually makes Atlanta better prepared to prevent or cope with another problem in the future, Archer said.

"When something happens, you learn from those experiences, and Chicago or Los Angeles have no idea about that," Archer said. "Did we have a perfect [Olympics] in '96? No, but I think we have learned from that experience, and that's what makes us strong."



Atlanta's bid for the 2006 Gay Games touts the centrally located 'Atlanta Triangle'—the downtown area home to most of the suggested venues—as a key strength of the city's proposal.

MA lesbian prepares race for House seat

Cheryl Jacques, an openly lesbian Massachusetts state senator, said she is running for the open seat in the 9th Congressional District despite low poll numbers and recent unfavorable press reports.

by PETER FREIBERG

BOSTON—Cheryl Jacques, an openly lesbian Massachusetts state senator, last week entered the hotly contested race for the Democratic nomination for the congressional seat left vacant by the death of U.S. Rep. Joseph Moakley.

Jacques, 39, who had been seeking the 2002 Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor, switched gears to run in the Sept. 11 primary in the 9th Congressional District, which includes parts of Boston and nearby suburbs.

The Democratic primary, which is already drawing national attention because it occurs in an off year for congressional elections, will almost certainly decide the winner in the heavily Democratic district.

Jacques (pronounced "Jakes") formally declared her candidacy July 15 before a crowd of supporters on the town common of Needham, her hometown and base of her state senate district for almost a decade. Flanking her was her family, including her partner of three years, Jennifer Chrisler, who will be the campaign's fulltime finance director.

Jacques, who came out last year during a fierce legislative battle over programs to protect and aid gay students, predicted in an interview that she would win the primary despite her relatively late entry into the race.

"We are very confident that we will raise what we need to run a good, hard, effective campaign and educate voters about who Cheryl Jacques is," she said.

But just days after she announced her candidacy, news stories made clear some of the obstacles Jacques faces.

A *Boston Herald* poll showed state Sen. Stephen Lynch, whom Boston gay activists consider anathema because of his fierce opposition to domestic partner benefits for government employees, way ahead in the six-person race, winning 36 percent of likely Democratic voters, with Jacques in fourth place with 10 percent.

Moreover, intense media attention sparked by Jacques's entry led to questions in the *Herald* and *Boston Globe* about raises totaling 92 percent she gave Chrisler, now her partner, during the four and a half years she was on Jacques's Senate staff.

There were also questions about a reduced-rent apartment Chrisler and Jacques's brother shared in a housing complex reserved primarily for the elderly.

Angus McQuilken, Jacques's chief of staff who is on leave to manage her campaign, denied any wrongdoing on Jacques's part and said he was "pleased" with the results of the *Herald* poll.

"That poll was taken just three days after she got in the race," he said in an interview. "She's got her eyes set firmly on Steve Lynch. ... Even if you accept this poll at face value, it shows that 64 percent of the vote has not gone to Steve Lynch."

After Jacques's entry, some gay groups moved quickly to support her.

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political organization, "enthusiastically endorses" her, said HRC Political Director Winnie Stachelberg.

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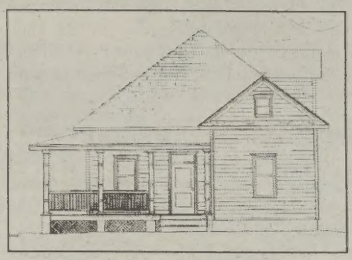

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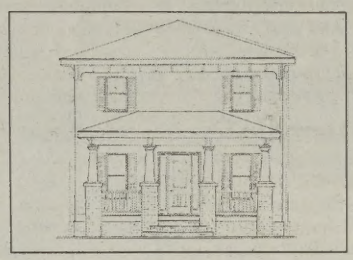

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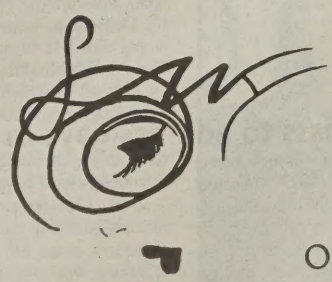

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Presbyterian church in KY fires gay-friendly minister

OWENSBORO, Ky. (AP) —The recent firing of Rev. Michael Erwin, who invited gays and Hispanics into the Central Presbyterian Church, has split the congregation and sparked a statewide debate. Erwin, fired by the church's governing board on July 1, was hired as pastor there last year. During his tenure, he expanded the outreach of the historic downtown church to include multiracial families, lesbians and gay men. Last November, the congregation also became a "More Light" church, which welcomes and affirms gay people in church life. But church members voted in July to withdraw from the More Light movement and sever ties with Erwin. Some of his supporters held a private worship service July 22. They also have discussed creating a new church with Erwin as its leader. "Why fight a system that doesn't want you to be a part of it for whatever reason?" asked Betsy Morton-Thomas, who is on the steering committee charged with examining the group's options.

MO erred in firing worker over gay foster parents, court says

JEFFERSON CITY, MO.—A federal appeals court has upheld a lower court ruling that found the state of Missouri erred when it fired a religious social worker who opposed the state's policy of licensing gays as foster parents, according to the *Washington Times*. "This is an important decision that underscores the fact that the government cannot discriminate against employees because of their religious beliefs," said Francis J. Manion, senior counsel for the American Center for Law & Justice, which represents the social worker, Larry Phillips, in the case. The Phillips case began in 1996, soon after the Baptist man was dismissed from his job overseeing 80 foster homes after protesting, on religious grounds, Missouri's efforts to recruit gays as foster parents. On Thursday, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld a verdict by a federal jury against the state and assessed damages totaling $26,000 and attorneys' fees of nearly $60,000. The state attorney general's office is considering an appeal.

Two denominations air views on gays at conference

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ aired conflicting views on homosexuality July 17 during a joint church convention. Mary Smith, a grandmother from Montana, said homosexuality is a sin and should not be affirmed in Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) teachings. "My children are constantly after me to leave the church because of its liberal stands, and if a position on affirming homosexuals were ever forced on us, I would leave," Smith said. "But I don't want to leave." Rev. Gerry Brague, an openly gay minister at a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation near San Francisco, said all of the church's members should be nurtured. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) gives each of its 3,800 congregations the authority to set church policy. The 1.4-million-member United Church of Christ has generally been open to affirming its gay members. Rev. John H. Thomas, the Cleveland-based denomination's president, said he opposes "unjust laws that protrude into the beautiful intimacy of love and sexual expression."

Rev. John H. Thomas, the Cleveland-based United Church of Christ's president, said he opposes 'unjust laws that protrude into the beautiful intimacy of love and sexual expression.'

Canadian bishop apologizes but says 'no' on unions

NEW WESTMINSTER, British Columbia—Bishop Michael Ingham of New Westminster recently apologized to gay Anglicans during a General Synod conference, saying the denomination has moved too slowly in deciding how to offer pastoral care to gays. The Anglican Communion News Service reported in July that Ingham's diocese in British Columbia, a province in Western Canada, has twice voted by narrow margins to ask him to bless same-sex unions. But he has refused, saying he would like a greater majority of those voting to request such an action. "We apologize to you for your treatment, and sometimes mistreatment, in the life of the church, for our slowness in recognizing you as sexual beings, created in the image of God, desiring a deeper communion with God and the freedom and responsibility of life-long permanent and committed unions in body, mind and spirit with those you love," he said. Ingham said he would like one day to bless a same-sex union but has postponed doing so "out of concern for the impact it would have on my church and the wider communion."

Methodists to address gays in TN meeting

NASHVILLE—Issues affecting lesbians and gay men are scheduled to be addressed Oct. 24-27 when the United Methodist Church's highest court convenes in Nashville to consider 11 cases on its current docket, the United Methodist News Service reported. The Pacific Northwest Annual Conference wants the nine-member Judicial Council to decide how two provisions of church law should be handled. Although the denomination's "Book of Discipline" states that ordained clergy members in good standing must be appointed to a church, Methodist leaders at the regional gathering in the Pacific Northwest recently denied appointments to two ministers who acknowledged that they are openly gay and non-celibate. Church policy bans appointing non-celibate gay ministers to preside over congregations.

—From staff and wire reports

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EDITORIAL

Pride gets Ambush-ed in New Orleans

by CHRIS CRAIN

Every gay community has its cliques and its rivalries, and the community in New Orleans is no exception. But once a year, in gay communities across the country, the annual Pride festivities are an opportunity to celebrate what unites us, not what divides us.

That's what makes the decision by Pride organizers in New Orleans to award an exclusive gay media sponsorship to one of the city's three gay publications so difficult to understand.

The goal of a media sponsorship is to get out the word about New Orleans Pride to the largest possible number of people. But the New Orleans Alliance of Pride, which organizes the festival, turned down flat an offer from this publication, and its sister magazine *Eclipse*, to run *free* advertisements about the event.

Instead, organizers awarded an "exclusive media sponsorship" to *Ambush*, a biweekly gay tabloid that is distributed in New Orleans, along the Gulf Coast, and in Austin, Texas. *Ambush*, which is owned and operated by Rip and Marsha Naquin-Delain, also manages a number of gay-themed Web sites.

It's not the first time New Orleans Pride organizers have cut an exclusive deal with *Ambush*. One year after the parent company of this newspaper purchased New Orleans' *Impact News* and *Eclipse*, Pride organizers said they would accept a sponsorship bid from the two publications.

But the late Sonny Cleveland, who had been running the festival, was also an employee of *Ambush* at the time and warned *Impact* and *Eclipse* that Rip Naquin-Delain would insist on exclusivity for *Ambush* or the publication would not participate at all as a sponsor.

Whether pressured by his boss or by *Ambush's* strong-arm tactics, Cleveland and other Pride organizers that year awarded an exclusive sponsorship to *Ambush*, a cozy deal that passed up dozens of free advertisements that would have reached gays in Atlanta, across the South, and throughout Texas.

It is difficult to know whether "the fix is in" again this year in New Orleans, but circumstances suggest a similar deal got cut behind closed doors, and against the clear best interest of gays in New Orleans.

Alliance of Pride Co-Chair Crystal Little told representatives of *Southern Voice* and *Eclipse* as late as June 21 that the committee had not yet met to consider sponsorship proposals. But the issue of *Ambush* already on the streets that week announced the publication had been awarded an exclusive media sponsorship.

Correction

An article in last week's *Southern Voice*, "ATL gay gym owners battle in court," incorrectly reported that Atlanta attorney and former City Council candidate Joe Kelly was named a "co-conspirator" in a civil suit between the gym owners, who are Kelly's former clients. There has been no allegation of wrongdoing against Kelly by any party. *Southern Voice* regrets the error.

AMBUSH
GALVESTON • HOUSTON • BATON ROUGE • LAFAYETTE • NEW ORLEANS
New Orleans & the Gulf Coast
southern voice
Lazfest raises $70,000 for AIDS housing
N.O. Pride excludes media outlet
eclipse
Ryan Idol goes 'Blue'

If this year's *Ambush* sponsorship was again the result of Naquin-Delain's strong-arm demand of exclusivity or nothing, then shame on him for making such a threat, and shame on Pride organizers for caving into it. *Southern Voice* and *Eclipse* have never and would never demand that a media sponsorship be exclusive, especially for a gay community event, and especially for Pride.

Is this any way to show Pride in New Orleans?

The New Orleans Pride Festival has never approached the popularity of the city's other gay mega-events like Mardi Gras, Southern Decadence and Halloween, even among locals. Since Cleveland's untimely death last year, organizers have struggled to put on a successful event. If ever there was a time for Pride organizers to accept multiple media sponsorships and get the word out to the largest audience possible, it's now.

Instead, Little has pointed out that other Pride sponsors, like Miller Brewing Co., demand their sponsorships be exclusive of their competitors. That tells us more about Miller Brewing's motivations than it does about whether exclusivity is good for New Orleans Pride. And at least Miller is putting up cold, hard cash for its exclusivity. Media sponsors like *Ambush* and this newspaper are turning over free advertising space, which is not the same thing as making a monetary donation.

Not surprisingly, Naquin-Delain refused to talk to a *Southern Voice* reporter about the sponsorship deal, but *Ambush* has claimed in print that its sponsorship package is worth thousands more than that offered by this newspaper and *Eclipse*. But all but about 7 percent of that purported "value" is from blinking banners offered by *Ambush* on some 35 gay-themed Web sites.

Ambush has long exaggerated the audience for those sites, which are not even listed on any legitimate Internet tracking system, and has no doubt offered little proof that anyone else is paying the rates it claims the banner ads are worth.

But even assuming that *Ambush* Web banners are worth their blinks in gold, an exclusive media sponsorship makes no sense for New Orleans Pride. If organizers believed the bid from *Southern Voice* and *Eclipse*, which also included free Web banners, was inferior, then they could have awarded *Ambush* a higher level of sponsorship. That's how every other gay community event handles things.

A gay community Ambushed

It's high time that New Orleans' gay community learned a little more about the abusive business practices employed at *Ambush* that are antithetical to a "community" publication.

Ever since former *Impact* Publisher Kyle Scafide had the temerity to launch *Eclipse* magazine in 1996, Naquin-Delain has demanded that his *advertisers* be exclusive as well. Gay bar owners in the French Quarter and beyond have been told that if they advertise in *Eclipse*, they will be refused advertising space in *Ambush*.

This isn't about the financial health of *Ambush*, either. Even bars that pledged to stay faithful as *Ambush* advertisers have been warned they would be dropped from the publication if they also advertised in *Eclipse*. A few larger bars have defied Naquin-Delain, but many smaller bars can't afford to incur his wrath.

Rivalry and competition among gay publications is usually a healthy thing; it encourages a higher level of quality, a greater commitment to meeting the needs of the community, and even better prices for advertisers. But cutthroat tactics like those employed by *Ambush* are anti-competitive and have no business in the marketplace, much less within the gay community.

However *Ambush* chooses to treat its advertisers, community event organizers like those at the Alliance of Pride have a responsibility to act in the best interest of the *entire* gay community, not just one segment of it and certainly not in favor of a single business owner with a Bill Gates fetish.

There's still time for *Ambush* to lower the sword of Damocles it is now holding over the New Orleans Alliance of Pride. But if Naquin-Delain refuses to do the right thing, then Pride organizers need to rethink their divisive, wrong-headed stance.

With strong-arm tactics that would make the Mafia blush, *Ambush* magazine takes the 'unity' out of 'community.'

ACTION | info

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New Orleans, La. 70116-3137
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ripna@ambushmag.com

New Orleans Alliance of Pride
Crystal Little, Co-Chair
504-457-7657

LETTERS

N.O. Pride founder furious at Ambush media deal

To The Editor:

I am furious about the decision by the New Orleans Alliance of Pride to exclude all media except *Ambush* magazine as the one designated "sponsor" ("N.O. Pride excludes media outlet," news, July 12).

In the late '70s when I opened my bar, several entrepreneurs would drop by to chat on my afternoon shift. Among them were Roy Letson and Gary Martin, whose dream was to start *Impact*, a gay newspaper for New Orleans. They made me the assistant editor, but I still paid for my ad and even wrote a column. Our goal then, as it should be now, was to unite the community and to provide as much local information as was available to us.

In 1978, I worked with others to organize the second Gay Fest in Washington Park, and we asked Miller Lite to sponsor the event. The day before we were to meet the salesman, I received a phone call from a friend who told me the Miller rep had written on his calendar, "Meet the fag at 3." I was furious and decided if Miller didn't need us, we didn't need them, and I threw Miller out of my bar.

Later, after more bars joined my protest, a lesbian was hired to handle Miller for the gay bars. So every time you see one of those full-page beer ads, remember someone worked awfully hard to make it happen.

To exclude any media, especially *Impact*—now the New Orleans edition of *Southern Voice*—is a slap in the face of an entire generation who put community unity before best interests. And if *Southern Voice/Impact* had exclusive rights to Pride sponsorship last year and years before that, then they should feel ashamed. That was wrong, too.

There would be no Gay Pride without *Impact's* support and the full-page beer ads would have been years down the road.

Listen, I have no horse in this race, but the irony of having to force Miller Lite into inclusion and then seeing *Impact*, which helped force that inclusion, now being excluded itself, is a disgrace, self-serving and certainly not in the best interest of the community.

Charlene Schneider
Bay St. Louis, Ms.

Editor's note: The letter writer was the longtime owner and operator of Charlene's, a gay and lesbian bar in New Orleans.

In the interest of promoting awareness within the gay community, it has been the policy of Southern Voice *since it was purchased in 1997—and* Impact *since its purchase in 1998—to neither solicit nor accept exclusive media sponsorships for gay community events.*

Putting Bush tax cut to good gay use

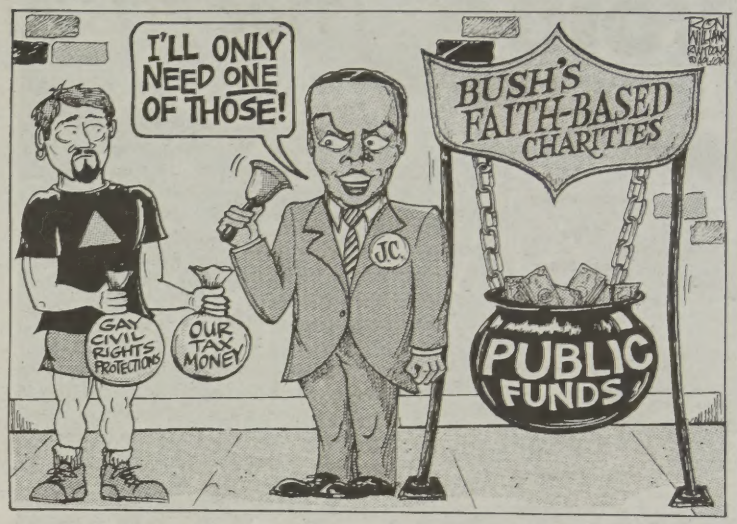
To the Editor:

Today I opened a letter from the IRS explaining that George W. Bush was giving me $300 in "tax relief." While I don't need this money to survive, many organizations in our community do—especially as the federal government curtails funding to charities to pay for our "tax relief."

For this reason, I will give my tax relief check to YouthPride, my favorite charity in the gay community. If everyone in Atlanta's gay community used this tax relief money to support their favorite charities, we would funnel millions of dollars to community organizations that serve our youth, feed our sick, advocate for our rights, and provide other necessary services.

I hope all gay men and lesbians will forsake the trinkets and thrills that $300 will buy for a long-lasting investment in our community.

Dolph Ward Goldenburg
Atlanta



ACLU deserves credit for taking on Michael Bowers

To the Editor:

I am surprised that you did not contact or mention the ACLU in your comprehensive review "Bowers v. Hardwick at 15" (news, July 25, 2001).

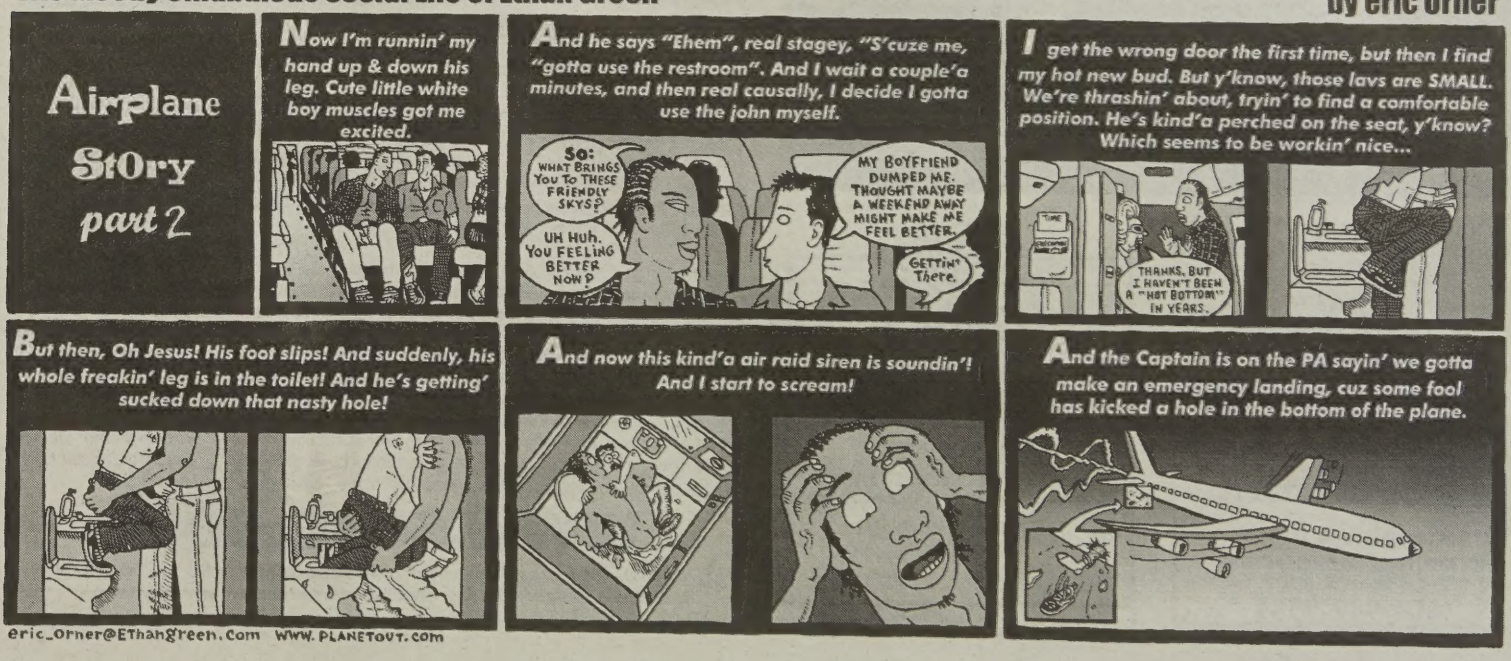
We were the attorneys of record in that landmark case. As a long-time board member for the ACLU of Georgia, I remember when we voted to represent Michael Hardwick against Michael Bowers in challenging Georgia's sodomy law. It was one of our most controversial cases.

The gay rights movement was not so popular then as it is today. Representing Hardwick caused as much ACLU-bashing as when we chose to defend the Klan's free speech rights, the Nazis in Skokie, or when we were the only organization in the country to challenge the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

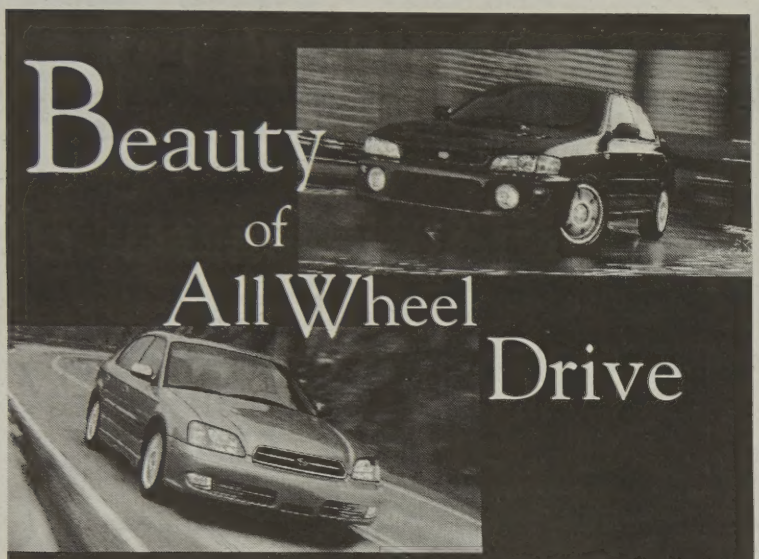
You also mentioned the Robin Shahar case in your story. The ACLU was the primary organization representing her, as well.

And finally, it should be noted that when the Georgia sodomy statute was finally overturned, ACLU attorney Gerry Weber wrote the words and legal theory that the Georgia Supreme Court justices quoted back almost verbatim. Just as a newspaper would like attribution for its pioneering work when it appears elsewhere, we at the ACLU are proud of our work in gay rights and seek the proper attribution.

Eleanor Brownfield
Atlanta


The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green
by eric orner
Airplane Story part 2
Now I'm runnin' my hand up & down his leg. Cute little white boy muscles got me excited.
And he says "Ehem", real stagey, "S'cuze me, "gotta use the restroom". And I wait a couple'a minutes, and then real causally, I decide I gotta use the john myself.
SO: WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THESE FRIENDLY SKYS?
MY BOYFRIEND DUMPED ME. THOUGHT MAYBE A WEEKEND AWAY MIGHT MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.
UH HUH. YOU FEELING BETTER NOW?
GETTIN' THERE.
I get the wrong door the first time, but then I find my hot new bud. But y'know, those lavs are SMALL. We're thrashin' about, tryin' to find a comfortable position. He's kind'a perched on the seat, y'know? Which seems to be workin' nice...
THANKS, BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN A "HOT BOTTOM" IN YEARS.
But then, Oh Jesus! His foot slips! And suddenly, his whole freakin' leg is in the toilet! And he's getting' sucked down that nasty hole!
And now this kind'a air raid siren is soundin'! And I start to scream!
And the Captain is on the PA sayin' we gotta make an emergency landing, cuz some fool has kicked a hole in the bottom of the plane.
eric_orner@EthanGreen.com WWW.PLANETOUT.COM

Beauty of All Wheel Drive



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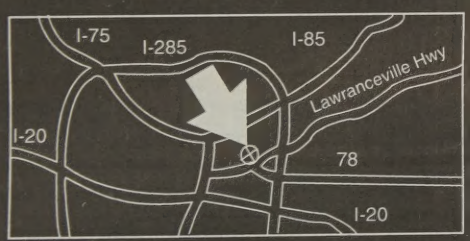

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Subject: "Fulton County rejects DP benefits" (ATL news, July 19)
Get those bums outta there. With the huge gay population in Atlanta, there's no reason but our own fault for letting these commission people run our lives while lining their own pockets. Get out and vote them out.

Well, so much for our Georgia Equality-endorsed Republican county commission chair and his lies to the gay community! Verbal promises aren't worth the paper they're written on! From now on, I'll vote Green or Democrat, and ignore those clowns at GE!

Thankfully, the New York Supreme Court (in its recent Yeshiva University decision) was able to see through this ridiculous "if they only would get married" loophole. The Court ruled that if one of the tests for services, is whether someone is married or not, and as a result lesbians and gays are discriminated against because they are unmarried (actually can't marry)—that this is really discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation contrary to what Fulton Commissioner Darnell says. We should work tirelessly to get these type of bigoted people out of government!

Subject: "Stonewall Dems defend Franklin mayoral nod" (letter, July 19)
Four of the ten reasons Georgia Stonewall Dems use to support Franklin are facts about her past that speak well for her. But, the other six are only promises. And we all know what a politician's promises are worth! Where do Stonewall Democrats get off calling themselves "Georgia's GLBT grassroots political organization" as if Georgia Equality, Log Cabin Republicans and Outright Libertarians don't even exist? This kind of thing makes you think that perhaps some people in Stonewall have a problem dealing with reality.

From Georgia Equality's Web site: "Georgia Equality is the educational and political voice of Georgia's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender citizens and their allies."

Keyword being "the." Have you noticed that this tagline gets printed every time GE is quoted in the paper? What's that? Free advertising if not bias in favor of GE on the part of *SoVo*?

Subject: "Alvear surprises, but still disappoints, lesbian readers" (letter, July 19)
Michael, congratulations again, you have written a great piece to divide us. I am tired of your perspective that comes across in a condescending manner. You have experience, but you don't write with any inclusiveness, and for that you are wrong. Stop dividing and start uniting and leave the world a better place. Listen to your readers for a change.

Subject: "Lesbians, allies organize in AL" (Mid South news, July 12)
I think that what you are trying to achieve is commendable. I grew up in a small town in Alabama, and I know the bigotry and the hatred that can easily be passed from one generation to the next regardless of what form it takes. Good luck, and be careful. Sometimes Alabama is only beautiful on the outside.

Subject: "Are donors being taken for an AIDS Ride?" by Chris Crain (editorial, July 5)
Look at the numbers and then ask yourself what are you complaining about. $83 million donated to AIDS causes! It takes money to make money. I rode proudly in the Texas AIDS Ride, and I'll ride proudly in the Canada Vaccine Ride this year. I'll reiterate a comment I read earlier today. You either get it or you don't. We'll wait for you to get it while we ride on.

As a four-time California AIDS Rider, I am troubled by what I am learning about Pallotta TeamWorks. I have, and naively so, believed that the AIDS Rides worked just like other charity fundraisers; the difference being the scale of the event. The thing that started my education about the ways of PTW was the HUGE amount of advertising going on in camp every night about "human potential" and the lack of focus on the specific reason we were all riding: to provide funds for our local AIDS services. I think that is when many of us started to really question what was going on and where our money was actually going. So, at this time I am still trying to decide where I stand regarding my own role in the "fund-raising/donations" part of this event. I am definitely not looking for a "personal growth" experience. I ride to help those with AIDS and to help prevent the continued spread of AIDS. It is hard for me to feel that I have somehow misrepresented myself to my donors. I know why I am doing this. I have to decide if "the ends justify the means."

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THE VIEW FROM HERE

Atlanta gays sit by while Fulton steals our rights

by CINDY ABEL

A proposal to offer domestic partner benefits to Fulton County employees died recently. Justice denied, injustice rationalized—and all without a fight.

Reeling from the news, I remembered feeling that kick-in-the-gut before, when a once-supportive Cincinnati council member eviscerated a non-discrimination ordinance by removing gay protections.

Though we knew of his plan two weeks before the vote, we refused to lay down in defeat. We stood and fought, taking our case to the people—whomever, wherever, however.

If we spoke up, we reasoned, we just might make people consider a different perspective—they already knew the other side's views. So we spoke to everyone from the national press to the obscure college radio stations. We came armed with our statistics and our sincerity and debunked their myths of gay privilege and debauchery.

We fought, knowing that, although the vote had been decided, until it was cast, we had a chance. Not a chance to change any minds on the council; those lines had long been drawn. But a chance to impact Middle America and win hearts, if not votes.

The council meeting was standing-room only and after hours of passionate speeches, the votes were predictably cast and counted. The crowd, wearing black armbands, spontaneously erupted into shouts of "Shame! Shame! Shame!" Council members seemed shocked by the anger of the otherwise well-mannered people facing them.

A few days later, we staged a funeral outside Cincinnati City Hall—complete with casket, sermons, flowers, and tears. Again, the people of Cincinnati saw our faces, heard our stories, and learned how justice had been denied.

What did we accomplish? Not much, according to the law. But according to the people—who are, after all, the ones who decide whether to discriminate regardless of what the law says—there was at least an incremental shift.

Weeks later, the middle-aged African-American clerk at the neighborhood grocery store brought up the ordinance vote. "It's wrong," she offered, shaking her head. "Just wrong what that councilman did to those people."

> When Cincinnati gutted a rights ordinance, local gays went home with dignity, though not a victory. In Atlanta, we just stayed home.

Our own hearts, too, were changed as we didn't give up and go quietly into anyone's dark and silent night. By fighting for ourselves, we won battles no one could ever take from us. When standing tall through tempted to duck, when speaking though unsure we would be heard, we reminded ourselves of what we claimed to believe: that we are absolutely and inherently worthy of equality.

We learned our own strength, flexing muscles we didn't realize we had. And from those experiences, there is no going back, no shrinking into small boxes, there is only more freedom to be discovered, to be savored.

But in Fulton County, the domestic partner proposal came and went quietly. Most gay people hardly knew about it. So hope died, no one at its bedside.

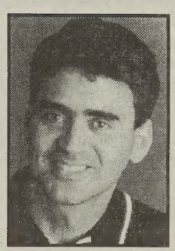
Without the chance to really fight, we didn't get to come and tell our stories, to share the impact on our lives, to offer the statistics that show how one county in Virginia actually made money by implementing a similar program. We didn't have a chance to win on any level, to participate in claiming our own rights. And that's what hurts most.

Just as there was no celebration for the passage of Atlanta's anti-discrimination ordinance, there will be no mourning for the death of Fulton County DP benefits. No fight, no funeral, no pallbearers.

My partner and I would've benefited from the passage of the proposal, but that failure is not what disheartens me most. The deep sense of loss is rooted in having sat on the proverbial bench and watched the game be forfeited. Fighting for something has value even when we know we're going to lose.

In Cincinnati, we went home with dignity, though not a victory. In Atlanta, we just stayed home.

Cindy Abel is the former executive director of the Georgia Equality Project, and currently owns a marketing communications firm. She can be reached at cabel@bizvox.cc.



SLOUCHING THROUGH SODOM

To dump or be dumped, that is the question

by MICHAEL ALVEAR

I went out with this guy a few times and realized I just wasn't that interested. He was a decent sort, so I did the right thing and agonized over the best way of letting him down easy.

I spent days rehearsing what I was going to say, seeking advice from friends on how to do it, and of course, complaining that I couldn't ever stay interested in decent guys.

When I called the guy to break it off, the words flowed easily: "You're a wonderful guy, but I think we're better off as friends."

Only the words didn't flow from my lips. They flowed from his.

He, too, had agonized over the best way of letting me down easy. He too spent days rehearsing what he was going to say, seeking advice from friends on how to do it, and of course complaining that he couldn't stay interested in decent guys.

The bastard.

Is there anything worse than being dumped by somebody you didn't want to continue seeing in the first place?

Is there anything worse than listening to a guy you're not interested in yammer on about how hard it is to break it off with you? If I could get my tomatoes to stew like I did on that phone call, I'd serve the best spaghetti in town.

The thing is you can't do anything about it, either. You can't exactly interrupt him in mid-breakup, insisting that you lost interest first.

> Is there anything worse than being dumped by somebody you didn't want to continue seeing in the first place?

Although God knows that's what I was thinking.

The worst part is having to tell your friends that you got beat to the punch. "How'd the guy take it?" one friend asked.

"Surprisingly well," I said.

The male ego is a fragile thing.

A couple of months ago the same thing happened, only it wasn't someone I dated; it was somebody I picked up at a bar. "How'd it go?" asked my friend, knowing the evening at the bar had been, ahem, profitable. "You going to see him again?" he asked.

"I don't know," I told him. "The sex was hot, but I can't really see myself with him."

"There you go again," said my friend. "Always ending it before it even starts. Why don't you just give it a chance?"

Of course, my friend was right. I thought about what a great time we had talking (and shtuuping) and thought, "You know, even though this guy isn't really my type, I should give him a chance."

I didn't have his number because in the late night good-byes I had simply given him mine. So I had to wait for him to call. Well, I waited all right. And waited and waited.

And waited and waited.

After a couple of weeks, I remembered a famous line from an obscure blues song: "If the phone ain't ringing, it's me."

The bastard.

When my friend asked me if I'd done the right thing and called to tell the guy I wasn't interested, I just said, "Nah, it just didn't seem worth the trouble."

If the male ego is feeble, mine's in a wheelchair.

It's amazing how your ego and your higher self share the same shelf space. On the one hand, my desire to find a dignified way to end my "engagements" is genuine, maybe even admirable. I know what it feels like to have somebody I'm interested in suddenly stop calling without an explanation, so I force myself to be honest and communicative when the chemistry goes dry on my part.

But then, my ego barges in like a drunken leatherman, threatening to snap my twinkie higher self in two. "Don't give me that noble shit!" it roars. "How dare he break it off with me when I'm the one who doesn't want to date him."

And then ego goes from leather to law: It wants to argue the case, hold evidentiary hearings, assemble a jury, all to prove that you were less interested in the other guy than he was in you.

You've got to be quick on the draw these days if you want to be the first to pull the trigger on a guy you're not interested in. You think you're going to plow the dump truck through his backyard and it ends up in your living room instead.

Beware gay dating's strange beeping sounds. It's the dump truck backing up on you.

Michael Alvear lives in Atlanta with Zoey & Zack, his lesbian Labrador and girlie-boy Vizsla. He can be reached at michaelalvear@mediaone.net.

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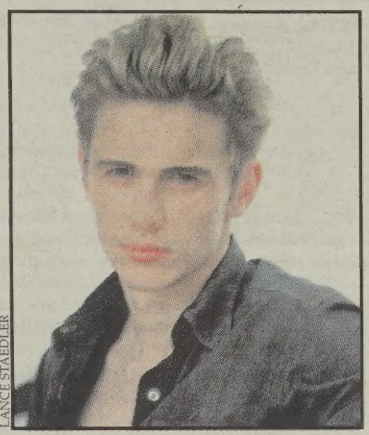
action! alert

by ANDREW KEEGAN

Rebel without a gay side

TNT's 'James Dean' scarcely mentions star's relationships with men



LANCE STAEDLER

James Franco stars in TNT's 'James Dean,' a made-for-television movie that offers little insight into Dean's sexual orientation.

An upcoming television special on the life of James Dean promises viewers the story of a genuinely tortured boy, according to the movie's director, but the gay side of the Hollywood icon is virtually ignored.

The passage of time has in no way established a clear portrait of the famed youthful actor. At least one part of Dean's life, his sexual orientation, has been dealt with in books but still seems to be a taboo subject when it comes to films.

Produced by TNT and starring James Franco, the film "James Dean" barely acknowledges the bisexuality of the brooding actor, despite more than circumstantial evidence to the contrary.

Elizabeth Taylor, Dean's co-star in the movie "Giant," once publicly stated, "He hadn't made his mind up yet," when asked about Dean's sexual orientation.

But Mark Rydell, the film's director who at one time worked with Dean on a New York television show, offers only a smattering of "you decide" scenes.

In one, Dean attends a television producer's late night private party in order to get work. Although there is no mention of sex, the scene implies Dean slept with the producer for a job.

The other token gay moment in the film revolves around Dean saying, "I'm not a homosexual, but I refuse to go through life with one hand tied behind my back."

Several published books have made a big issue of portraying Dean as gay, while others have gone to great lengths to simply provide factual information without offering a conclusion about the star's sexual orientation.

"Rebel: The Life and Legend of James Dean," by Donald Spoto, provides a clearer picture of the actor's bisexuality. Spoto finds no evidence that Dean was a male hooker, as rumored, or that he was strictly gay.

Yet Dean did have several male lovers, primarily older men, according to Spoto, who has also written biographies of Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor and Tennessee Williams.

Dean essentially wanted attention, whether it be from a male or female, Spoto surmised.

During his research, Spoto discovered Dean felt a strong need for an older male role model, due to his own father abandoning him at an early age, and often accomplished this within the context of a sexual relationship.

The book explains Dean's romantic flings were greatly exaggerated and the outcome of the relationship was more important than the sex of the lover.

"Dean was oriented toward people who cared for him, not toward an essential orientation," Spoto concluded.

John Gilmore's memoir of his friendship with Dean, "Live Fast, Die Young: My Life With James Dean," details their relationship and sexual exploration.

According to Gilmore, Dean was not gay but rather a self-described "opportunistic explorer."

"James Dean considered sleeping with a guy as an extension of friendship," wrote Gilmore. "He saw nothing wrong with taking the friendship to another level."

Still, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, a gay media watchdog organization, offered no criticism of the absence of bisexuality in TNT's film.

Nick Adams, media manager for GLAAD, deemed the film's portrayal accurate.

"Although James Dean is an icon to the gay community, we support TNT's decision not to produce a film based on gossip and innuendo," Adams said.

Michelle Kern, public relations manager for TNT, said the film does mention Dean's bisexuality, but chooses to explore the psychological side of Dean rather than a biographical one.

"You would have to speak with someone involved in making the movie for further information," Kern said.

Director Mark Rydell could not be reached for comment at press time.

ACTION! info

'James Dean' on TNT

Aug. 5, 8 p.m.
Turner Network Television
1010 Techwood Dr. NW
Atlanta GA 30318
404-885-4538
TNT@turner.com

If you know of an issue that needs response or lobbying from Southern Voice *readers, please e-mail editor@sovo.com or fax to 404-876-2709.*

"quote/unquote"

compiled by REX WOCKNER

Tammy Lynn Michaels with Melissa Etheridge

"I was out with a bunch of girlfriends. 'Popular' had literally wrapped for the season—and the series, for that matter—the night before. I had been avoiding gay bars the entire time I was working so all of a sudden I was like, 'Let's go out! C'mon, girls, I don't care who sees me!' So we were sitting at this table and there she was. So up until then, I'd been living in a virtual tunnel for the past 10 years. I mean, I knew who she was, but I wasn't super aware. I mean, I'm not a celebrity stalker or anything."

—Actress Tammy Lynn Michaels from TV's "Popular" on meeting her new girlfriend, rocker Melissa Etheridge, to mightybigtv.com, July 14

"If one has to sum up [my breakup with Julie Cypher], you could say, 'Okay, [Julie's] just not gay.' I believe it's much, much more than that. She also fell out of love with me, personally. ... In my family, divorce is failure. But I know now that ultimately it was me taking care of myself, doing the best for myself and it's not a failure."

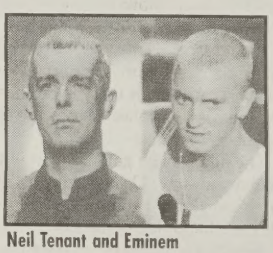
—Lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge to L.A.'s *Lesbian News*, July issue

"We need to elect a lot of liberal Democrats! Work real hard to elect them to Congress in 2002! AIDS needs to be up there with or above every human concern the government deals with, which certainly isn't going to happen with the piddling amount of money Bush assigned to it!"

—Bisexual syndicated gossip columnist Liz Smith to the AIDS magazine *A&U*, July issue

"The great thing about Eminem is he's so interested in homosexuality. 'Stan' is a gay love song. We've actually written a song for our next album called 'The Night I Fell in Love' that's written from the point of view of an 18-year-old boy who goes to an Eminem concert and meets him backstage and ends up going to bed with him."

—Neil Tennant of the Pet Shop Boys to Atlanta's *Etcetera* magazine, July 6



Neil Tenant and Eminem

"It's been my experience that most gay and lesbian people across the country, even some of the most politically astute and interested of us, feel depressingly detached, sometimes hopelessly so, from the national organizations in charge of our movement. In short, few of us feel the national organizations are even the tiniest bit relevant to our lives. Certainly NGLTF isn't the only organization suffering from this kind of disconnect. But it's fair to say that in recent years NGLTF has suffered from the problem more than other large national gay and lesbian groups."

—Syndicated columnist Mubarak Dahir in a July filing

"Who isn't sick of seeing some movie about twentysomething white kids in a gay ghetto? Enough of that."

—Thomas Bezucha, director of the gay-themed film "Big Eden," to the *New York Blade News*, July 13

Patricia Ireland

"Today, [outgoing National Organization for Women President Patricia] Ireland says her [heterosexual] marriage is still strong, but the D.C.-based [gay] relationship is over. It ended approximately three to four years ago, though the two women are still friends and share joint custody of two cats. They meet once a week or so to hand off the felines. The other woman is now in another relationship, Ireland says, and is living with and raising a child with her new partner."

—*Washington Post*, July 19

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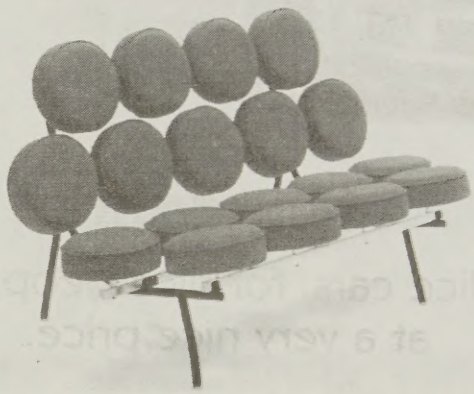

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Taking Pride in Our Culture • July 26/2001

The happy voice behind the angry inch

John Cameron Mitchell is riding high as he's chosen best new director by Sundance and his film 'Hedwig & the Angry Inch' is set to open at theaters around the country

by STEVE WARREN

John Cameron Mitchell plays Hedwig in "Hedwig & the Angry Inch"—both on stage and screen. The character Hedwig is an East German who had a sex-change operation (badly executed, leaving the "angry inch" of the title) so he could marry an American soldier and move to the U.S., just before the Berlin Wall fell.

Now she's touring the States with a rock band and seeking revenge on Tommy Gnosis, her former teenage lover who stole her material and used it to reach the top of the charts.

Mitchell is more than just the title character here—he's also the creator, along with songwriter-musician Stephen Trask. The two met on a plane in 1994 and began developing what would become "Hedwig & the Angry Inch." Their collaboration first reached the stage at New York's Squeezebox, a drag-punk club with a largely gay clientele, where Trask was in the house band, Cheater.

Mitchell had been working as an openly gay actor for nearly a decade. He appeared in such musicals and plays as "The Secret Garden" and "Six Degrees of Separation," and made a few television appearances on shows like "Party Girl," "Law & Order" and "The Twilight Zone."

"Being out has affected my career in a good way," Mitchell says. "If someone doesn't want to work with me because I'm gay I wouldn't want to work with them. I've told people, 'If you won't hire me because I'm gay it's your loss. You know I could play the part.'

When he and Trask wrote "Hedwig" they weren't thinking in commercial terms," Mitchell says. (This may be what gives the script the honesty that connects with audiences on so many levels.) "We really only wrote it for ourselves and our friends. We never did it for money.

"'Hedwig' was developed in the esoteric environment of the Squeezebox," Mitchell says, "which in turn was built on Bowie and punk rock... that had gone before."

It began with the character, a few monologues and a few songs. "Hedwig" outgrew that venue and was moved to a home of her own in a longer, more structured production.

"Our stage director, Peter Askin, was very helpful in shaping the show," Mitchell credits. "We built a theater in the ballroom of a flophouse hotel because there wasn't a suitable venue available."

Mitchell refers to "Hedwig" as an "emotional autobiography," influenced as it is by people and places he knew growing up as an army brat from Berlin, where his

➢ Continued on Page 36

Openly gay actor John Cameron Mitchell plays Hedwig, a former East German with a botched sex-change operation who's trying to make it big in the American rock scene.

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THE ANNIVERSARY PARTY (R) Film co-written by Jennifer Jason Leigh and openly bisexual actor Alan Cumming; the actors star as a couple celebrating their sixth wedding anniversary. Atlanta (AMC Phipps Plaza 14), New Orleans (Canal Place Cinemas).

THE CLOSET (PG-13) From the creator of "La Cage Aux Folles" comes this film about a straight corporate employee who's advised by his gay neighbor to pretend to be queer so he won't lose his job at a condom factory. Gerard Depardieu stars as a homophobe trying to mend his ways. Area theaters.

FREE FRIDAY FLICKS Thru Aug 17. Movies begin at sunset, free admission. Birmingham (Homewood Park), 205-741-2168.

THE LUHZIN DEFENSE An adaptation of Vladimir Nabokov's novel by openly lesbian director Marleen Gorris. Birmingham (Regal Galleria), Knoxville (Regal Downtown West), Memphis (Ajay Theatre-Hollywood 20).

MOULIN ROUGE (PG-13) A postmodern musical set in a Paris nightclub circa 1900. David Wenham plays a gay lyricist. Area theaters.

ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW Every Friday at midnight. Atlanta (LeFont Plaza, 1049 Ponce de Leon Ave. 404-873-1939). Also Sat., midnight. Raises funds for AIDS Survival Project. Marietta, Ga. (Blackwell Theater, 3378 Canton Rd. 770-428-2617), New Orleans (615 Toulouse St. 504-565-5400), Covington, La. (Star Theatre, 332 N. New Hampshire).

The controversial film 'Sister My Sister,' the tale of an incestuous sibling relationship, screens at the Lesbian & Gay Center in New Orleans this week.

SISTER MY SISTER Tells the story of two incestuous sisters who act out games of domination and submission. Joely Richardson and Julie Waters star. July 27, 7 p.m. New Orleans (Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 2114 Decatur St. 504-945-1103).

SONGCATCHER (PG-13) A musicologist visits her schoolteacher sister, a lesbian, in Appalachia. Asheville (Skyland Arts Cinema), Atlanta (UA Tara), Knoxville (Regan Downtown West), Nashville (Regal Green Hills).

SUMMER CLASSIC FILM SERIES Alabama Theater thru Aug 27. Birmingham (256-251-0408 or www.alabamatheater.com).

TOMB RAIDER (PG-13) Stars openly bisexual actor Angelina Jolie as an adventurer. Area theaters.

WITH A FRIEND LIKE HARRY... (R) A French thriller with homoerotic overtones details the horrors of domestic heterosexual life. Birmingham (Regal Galleria), Knoxville (Regal Downtown West), Nashville (Regal Green Hills).

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FILM, VIDEO & TV REVIEWS

by STEVE WARREN

How to serve man

David and Laurie Shapiro examine experiences of a septuagenarian gay Jewish artist-anthropologist

You can't avoid tired jokes about gay men being meat-eaters when cannibalism is the main selling point for **KEEP THE RIVER ON YOUR RIGHT: A MODERN CANNIBAL TALE.** But filmmakers David Shapiro and Laurie Gwen Shapiro needed a hook to justify shooting a documentary on three continents about a septuagenarian gay Jewish artist-anthropologist.

Tobias Schneebaum, filmed between the ages of 76 and 78, is shown at home in New York City and revisiting Peru and Asmat, New Guinea.

Even before gay activists popularized the slogan "We Are Everywhere," Schneebaum was proving it. The film doesn't discuss that aspect of his 1955 Fulbright-sponsored visit to Peru, but there's considerable discussion about the bisexual men of New Guinea, including a reunion between Tobias and Aipit, a former lover with whom he still shares affection.

Norman Mailer recalls knowing Schneebaum in 1951: "Toby was like, our house homosexual," and says Schneebaum's stereotype-breaking expanded Mailer's own understanding of gay men.

Schneebaum, who has the soul of a Borscht Belt comic, supplements his Social Security income by lecturing about the art and anthropology of Indonesia on cruise ships. We see part of a lecture as he shows slides of three male couples, saying each time, "These men are lovers."

His tour includes a ritual in one village: "We're seeing the ceremonial circumcision of 30 young boys." We see all the boys but only one circumcision, which is more than enough.

It was in Peru that Schneebaum once dined on human flesh, but what was more traumatic was going along on what he thought was a routine hunting expedition and landing in the middle of an attack on another tribe. Today the Peruvians speak of cannibalism as something they've left behind, as most Germans have written off Nazism.

More than 40 years after his last encounter with a once-cannibalistic Peruvian tribe of bisexual men, Tobias Schneebaum returns for a visit with a former lover in 'Keep the River on Your Right: A Modern Cannibal Tale.'

INFO

'Keep the River on Your Right: A Modern Cannibal Tale'

★★ 1/2

Directed by David Shapiro and Laurie Gwen Shapiro

Starring Tobias Schneebaum

Queer Quotient: The gay subject of this documentary offers some anecdotes about the casual attitude toward bisexuality in some "primitive" cultures. Georgia State cinefest (Atlanta), July 27-Aug. 2) Check local listings nationwide.

'America's Sweethearts'

★★ 1/2

Directed by Joe Roth

Starring Julia Roberts, Billy Crystal, Catherine Zeta-Jones, John Cusack

Queer Quotient: There are jokes about an actress playing a lesbian and a three-way between two men and a woman, but nothing seriously queer, even if some minor characters appear to be gay.

The overall impression left by the film is that Tobias Schneebaum is a dull man who's led an interesting life. "Keep the River on Your Right" is a curious mix of the boring and the intriguing, bringing the mundane to exotic locations.

Hollywood spoofs itself with mixed results in **AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS**, a hybrid romantic comedy/industry satire. Lacking the bite of "Sunset Boulevard" and the camp appeal of "The Legend of Lylah Clare," it would have earned a lot more respect if Columbia Pictures had the guts to add a line about phony quotes in ads, poking fun at their own recent embarrassment.

Instead it's the usual stuff about a self-absorbed star (Catherine Zeta-Jones), her self-sacrificing sister/personal assistant (Julia Roberts), a publicist (Billy Crystal) doing damage control, an emotionally fragile actor (John Cusack) recovering from a nervous breakdown, a maverick director (Christopher Walken) and a driven, unfeeling studio head (Stanley Tucci, very funny).

As the story goes, Gwen (Zeta-Jones) and Eddie (Cusack) were "America's Sweethearts," on and off screen through nine films together. They broke up a year and a half ago when she dumped him for a Spanish gigolo, but still have a film in the can.

Eddie's been too upset to work but Gwen has made two pictures without him that have "crashed and burned," so both actors can use a hit. Crystal gets them to reunite for a press junket to promote their unreleased film.

Eddie hopes the reunion can be permanent but Gwen is ready to serve divorce papers and Kiki (Roberts) plans to seize the moment to make her own move on Eddie.

This is as safe a movie as Hollywood can produce. If you're not looking for edginess, take that as a recommendation.

Catherine Zeta-Jones and John Cusack are an estranged Hollywood couple in 'America's Sweethearts.'

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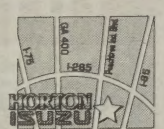

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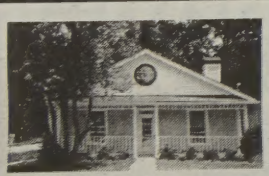

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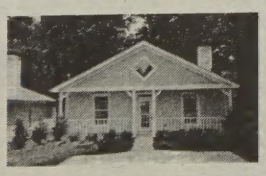

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CALENDAR

saturday, july 28

DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN Somehow, Madonna and Rosanna Arquette are mistaken for one another. (2 hrs.) Comedy Central at 3 p.m.

WOMEN'S GOLF The Giant Eagle Classic. (2 hrs.) ESPN2 at 2 p.m.

BIG BROTHER 2 See how gay cast member Bunky fairs. (1 hr.) CBS at 8 p.m. **CC**

SPYDER GAMES MARATHON MTV airs four back-to-back episodes of their soap spoof that features a gay character. (2 hrs.) MTV at 9 p.m.

WOMEN'S GOLF The Giant Eagle Classic. (2 hrs.) ESPN2 at 3:30 p.m.

GREASE Classic hit from openly gay director Randal Kleiser. (2 hrs.) UPN at 4 p.m. **CC**

LOS BELTRAN Spanish-language sitcom featuring a gay couple as the next-door neighbors. (30 min.) Telemundo at 8 p.m.

SEX & THE CITY Carrie's friendship with Big is a problem for Aidan. (30 mins.) HBO at 9 p.m. **CC**

SIX FEET UNDER David goes through the embarrassing experience of running into his ex while at a gay bar with his current boyfriend. (1 hr.) HBO at 9:30 p.m. **CC**

LEAP YEARS An innovative series that simultaneously looks at a group of friends, one of whom is gay, in the past, present and future. (1 hr.) Showtime at 10 p.m.

AMERICAN BEAUTY Oscar-winning film about a dysfunctional suburban family; their gay neighbors are the most well-adjusted people on the block. (2 hrs. 5 min.) Cinemax at 11:35 p.m. **CC**

THIS AMERICAN LIFE Ira Glass' radio showcase of America's weird and wonderful regularly features gay humor writer David Sedaris. WABE 90.1 FM at 4 p.m. **Atlanta.**

sunday, july 29

'Queer As Folk' airs on Showtime Sundays at 10 p.m.

monday, july 30

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP John Lithgow plays Roberta, a transsexual former football player, and the most well-adjusted person in this drama. (2 hrs., 20 min.) The Movie Channel at 11 a.m. **CC**

ALL MY CHILDREN This long-running serial now features Bianca, the lesbian daughter of legendary Erica Kane (Susan Lucci). (1 hr.) ABC Weekdays at 1 p.m.

SPYDER GAMES This serial is both a spoof of the soap genre and a reveling in it. Look for Byron Field who plays Ivan, a closeted gay newlywed. (30 mins.) MTV Monday through Friday at 7 p.m.

THE BEST MAN The movie adaptation of gay writer Gore Vidal's Broadway hit about the fight for a Presidential nomination. (1 hr. 45 mins.) Turner Classic Movies at 8 p.m.

THE MISTS OF AVALON The conclusion from Sunday night. (2 hrs.) TNT at 8 p.m.

THE NEXT BEST THING Madonna plays a yoga instructor who starts an unconventional family with her gay best friend (Rupert Everett). (1 hr. 50 mins.) Showtime at 11 p.m. **CC**

CECIL B. DEMENTED John Waters takes on Hollywood in this tale of a starlet (Melanie Griffith) kidnapped by guerrilla filmmakers. (1 hr. 30 mins.) Sundance at 11 p.m.

UNDRESSED This soap-opera like series follows three young couples, often including gay and bisexual characters. (30 min.) MTV weeknights at 11 p.m.

C1TV New cable show devoted to gay men and lesbians. Showing censored episodes of "Queer as Folk." Cable 9, 16, 24, or 25 at 11 p.m. **Atlanta.**

tuesday, july 31

ZORRO, THE GAY BLADE George Hamilton plays Ramon "Bunny" Wigglesworth, a flamboyantly gay swashbuckler who steps in when the original Zorro is injured. (1 hr., 40 min.) Encore at 6:20 p.m.

BIG BROTHER 2 The second episode of the week. (1 hr.) CBS at 8 p.m.

X-MEN Sir Ian McKellan plays nefarious mutant menance Magneto in this adaptation of the Marvel comic series that many critics felt had a gay subtext. (1 hr. 45 mins.) Cinemax at 10 p.m. **CC**

LEAP YEARS See Sunday at 10 p.m. listing (1 hr.) Showtime at 11 p.m.

wednesday, aug. 1

GIANT An Oscar winner in 1953, this tale of a Texas oil family who deals with racial injustice stars Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean (3 hrs. 30 mins.) Turner Movie Classics at 1:15 p.m.

REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN EYE A closeted homosexual army officer (Marlon Brando) lusts after one of his colleagues. Elizabeth Taylor also stars as one of the other oddballs who round out the bizarre cast of characters. (1 hr. 50 mins.) Turner Movie Classics at 4:45 p.m.

WEST WING President Bartlett and company discuss the issue of gays in the military. (1 hr.) NBC at 9 p.m. **CC**

SIX FEET UNDER See Sunday at 10 p.m. listing (1 hr.) HBO at 9 p.m.

SEX IN THE CITY See Sunday at 9 p.m. listing. (30 mins.) HBO at 10 p.m.

LAW AND ORDER When a gay man is killed and his adopted son kidnapped, lawyers debate whether or not it is a hate crime. (1 hr.) NBC at 10 p.m. **CC**

thursday, aug. 2

WOMEN'S GOLF After last week's men's tournament, it's the women's turn to compete in the British Open. (2 hrs.) ESPN at 11 a.m.

BIG BROTHER 2 Keep your fingers crossed for gay housemate Bunky, as the second person is evicted from the house. (1 hr.) CBS at 8 p.m.

INSPECTOR GADGET Matthew Broderick plays the gadget-enhanced detective and gay actor Rupert Everett plays his nemesis The Claw. (1 hr. 25 mins.) Encore at 8 p.m. **CC**

WILL & GRACE Karen gets catty with a rival socialite. (30 mins.) NBC at 9 p.m. **CC**

BEHIND THE MUSIC The music documentary series casts its eye on out rocker Elton John (1 hr.) VH1 at 9 p.m. **CC**

friday, aug. 3

WOMEN'S GOLF The women's British Open continues (2 hrs.) ESPN at 11 a.m.

BENT Clive Owen plays a gay Berliner in the 1930's whose decadent lifestyle is destroyed when he is taken to a Nazi death camp. (1 hr. 45 mins.) Sundance at 9 p.m.

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS Jodie Foster plays an FBI agent trying to stop a gay serial killer. The film won five Oscars, but gay activist group protested its familiar "gay menace" theme. (2 hrs.) A&E at 9 p.m. and 1 a.m.

MOUTH OF THE SOUTH LIVE! Peg's weekly cocktail party; taped live at the Metro on Mondays. People TV, cable channel 12 or 24 on Thur at 11 p.m.; Sat at 10 p.m. **Atlanta.**

RADIO FREE GEORGIA Alternative radio station's shows of interest include "Sister's Time" Thur 6 p.m.; "Alternative Talk" Fri 5 p.m.; "Lambda Radio Report" Tues 6 p.m. WRFG 89.3 FM. **Atlanta.**

DEAUNDRA PEEK'S TV SHOW Fri 11:30 p.m.; Sat 11 p.m.; People TV, cable channel 12 or 24. **Atlanta.**

To add a listing, e-mail calendar@sovo.com or fax to 404-876-2709.

on the air

by BRIAN MOYLAN

Queering the Emmys

A number of significant TV efforts you'd expect capture Emmy nods, while some go overlooked

Though much of the hype surrounding this year's Emmy nominations has centered around the showdown between the mobsters on "The Sopranos" and the politicos on "The West Wing," the nominations didn't fail to recognize much of the gay and gay-friendly programming on television.

As it did last year, **"Will and Grace"** leads the pack as the most nominated comedy series, garnering 12 nods, including one for Outstanding Comedy Series. Sean Hayes, who plays Jack, and Megan Mullally, who plays Karen, won awards last year for Best Supporting Actor and Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, and both are nominated again.

Eric McCormack and Debra Messing, who play Will and Grace, were nominated again this year for Best Actor and Actress in a Comedy Series.

It seems that Emmy is more fond of Grace's outfits than Karen is, since the show earned a nomination in the Costume category. "Will and Grace" was also recognized for writing, picture editing, directing, cinematography, casting, and art direction.

The biggest competition for "Will and Grace" is HBO's **"Sex and the City."** Michael Patrick King, the show's openly gay head writer and executive producer, was nominated twice for his two posts at the show. Two of the characters he writes—Carrie, played by Sarah Jessica Parker, and Samantha, played by Kim Catrall—are nominated in the Actress and Supporting Actress categories.

"Sex and the City," which has created as much buzz for its clothes as for its characters, is also nominated in the costume category. It will be a tough race between Karen's uptown socialite chic and Carrie's downtown sophisticate glamour this year.

The television adaptation of lesbian playwright Margaret Edson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play **"Wit"** also landed a bevy of nominations, including two for Emma Thompson, who helped adapt the play for the screen and starred in it.

A mini-series about a gay icon, **"Life with Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows"** swept up nominations in the mini-series categories, including outstanding mini-series.

Ellen DeGeneres, who is scheduled to host this year's Emmy ceremonies, is also up for two awards, for her HBO comedy special **"Ellen DeGeneres: The Beginning."** On top of trying to make the audience laugh on Emmy night, she will also be vying for Outstanding Variety, Musical, or Comedy Special and Outstanding Individual Performance in a Special.

There were several disappointments after this year's nominations were announced. **"Armistead Maupin's Further Tales of the City,"** which was nominated for Outstanding Mini-Series, didn't receive any other nominations.

"Queer As Folk," wildly popular with gay audiences and the most watched show on Showtime, didn't receive a single nod.

"ER," which prominently featured the story line of Dr. Carrie Weaver's coming out this season, was nominated for Outstanding Drama Series. However, Laura Innes, who plays Dr. Weaver, was neglected, though her co-star Maura Tierney is vying for the Outstanding Supporting Actress trophy.

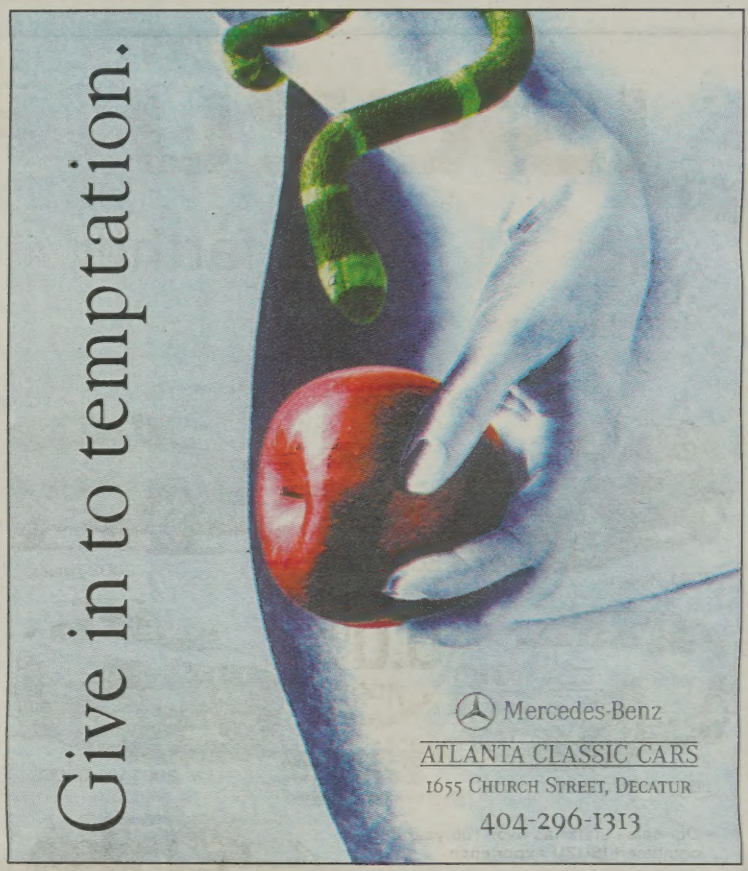
Many series that feature regular gay characters were nominated for only one award. Holly Hunter was recognized for her performance as Billie Jean King in the TV movie **"When Billie Beat Bobby."**

In its final season, **"Xena: Warrior Princess"** was nominated only for, of all things, Outstanding Music Composition for a Series. Perhaps the academy thought Xena's patented war cry was a symphonic work.

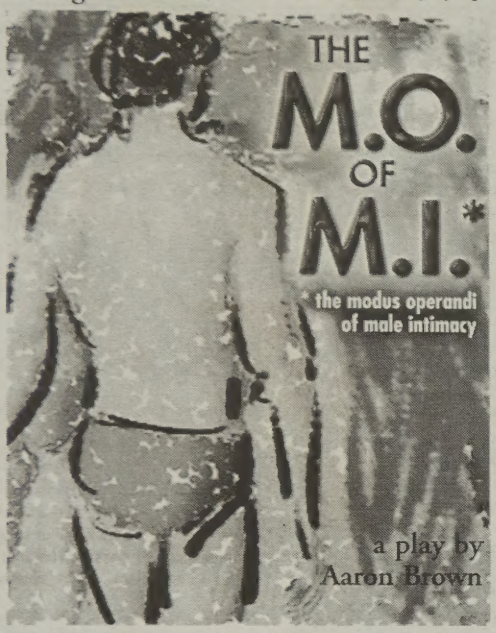
INFO

Academy of Television Arts & Sciences
Emmy Awards
Sept. 16, CBS
www.emmys.tv

The cast of NBC's 'Will and Grace' is all smiles—they snagged yet another round of Emmy nominations for the much touted show. Expect some competition, however, from another queer favorite—HBO's 'Sex and the City.'



Regional Premiere



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dj dance music picks

atlanta dj chai

1. **IRRESISTABLE** by Jessica Simpson
2. **HIDE U** by Susanna Palmer
3. **I GOT MY PRIDE** by Barry Harris featuring Pepper Mashay
4. **TROUBLE DON'T LAST ALWAYS** by Vernessa Mitchell
5. **I GOT A TRACK ON YOU** by 68 beats
6. **KEEP CONTROL** by Sono
7. **DON'T BREAK MY HEART** by Safire
8. **CHEEKA BOW BOW** by Vengaboys
9. **COME WITH ME** by Sal Dano
10. **YOU'RE THE WORST THING** by Pusaka featuring Thea Austin

Chai spins at Ground Zero on Aug. 4 and can be reached at compuboy@aol.com.

new orleans dj joe gauthreaux

1. **RUNNING** by Information Society (Calderone's Leather Mix)
2. **TWISTING MY BRAIN** by Chris Soul & Rob Mirage (Dub)
3. **PLANETS OF THE UNIVERSE** by Stevie Nicks (Illicit Dub)
4. **MEET HER AT THE LOVE PARADE** by Da Hool (2001 Hooligan Remix)
5. **FLIGHT 643** by DJ Tiesto (Oliver Klien Mix)
6. **321 FIRE** by Santos (Trisco Mix)
7. **HORNY HUSTLE** by Twisted Pair (Jamie Andersen Mix)
8. **WE'RE GOING UP** by Donna Washington (Gospel Flavor Mix)
9. **YOU SET ME FREE** by Abigail (Andy & the Lamboy Mix)
10. **LONG TRAIN RUNNING** by Doobie Brothers (2001 Mix)

Joe Gauthreauz spins at Oz in New Orleans and can be reached at www.djjoeg.com.

houston dj michael tank

1. **ABSOLUTELY NOT** by Deborah Cox (Hex Hector's HQ2 Club Mix)
2. **SECRET** by Madonna (Guido Remix)
3. **SET ME FREE** by Abigail (Mindtrap Mix)
4. **I GOT MY PRIDE** by Barry Harris featuring Pepper Marshay
5. **YES** by Amber (Hex Hector Club Mix)
6. **HIDE U** by Suzanne Palmer (Mike Macaluso Vocal Mix)
7. **THERE YOU GO** by Pink (Junior's Gotta Go Club Mix)
8. **LOVE DEVINE** by Ron Perkov (Tony Moran NY Anthem Mix)
9. **OHH LA LA** by Valeria (Mijangos Orgasmic Mix)
10. **RUNNING** by Information Society (Calderone Remix)South Beach

Michael Tank spins at South Beach in Houston and can be reached at www.michaeltank.com.

out in music

by PENNY WEAVER

Townsend breaks onto national scene

SC lesbian's new CD, *Redemption*, showcases inventive original songs, personalized classics

South Carolina singer/songwriter **ELAINE TOWNSEND** steps into Atlanta's popular acoustic lesbian music scene Aug. 4, and fans of all types of music are likely to welcome the invasion.

Townsend's second major CD release, "Redemption," has earned her notice in places such as the magazine *Performing Songwriter* and South Carolina's House of Blues, where she recently opened for the Neville Brothers. She also won the prestigious Falcon Ridge Folk Festival songwriting contest.

In addition, Townsend has opened shows for the likes of Shawn Colvin, John Prine, Atlanta duo the Indigo Girls, k.d. lang and Fleetwood Mac.

The out lesbian musician says it all began with a simple ploy for romantic attention. "I actually started learning guitar at camp when I was 12 to impress girls," says Townsend with a laugh.

Growing up in the '70s in Columbia, S.C., her love of music blossomed into admiration of musicians from Joni Mitchell to Joan Baez, James Taylor and more. The blues, from urban to delta styles, have a strong influence in Townsend's musical offerings as well.

"I like to say that I'm inspired by everybody from Aerosmith to Zappa. I really am a sponge," she says. "I like to think that all of that influences me."

Although Townsend's day job is as a child and family therapist—she has a master's degree in social work—she's becoming known across the South and the nation for her music, which she describes as "eclectic acoustic."

"I'm often asked what kind of music I play," she says. "It's very hard to give a simple answer. I like to think of my music as just a kind of gumbo of styles. It's just kind of all in there."

"Redemption" is her second full-length project. The artist herself likes this new work better than her first, "Heartbreaker Blues," which she says was overproduced.

"I was really careful this time to keep the guitar front and center," Townsend says.

The CD was recorded live, and Townsend says she was grateful to work with a number of other musicians and Columbia-area vocalists. Talents heard on the CD include those of Hootie and the Blowfish drummer Jim Sonefeld and Atlanta native and lesbian music favorite Danielle Howle.

"It was really nice to bring all of these people together," Townsend says.

The next steps in her career include continuing to promote the new CD and efforts to sign with a major record label.

"I am shopping to a very limited number of labels—like three," Townsend reveals. "I feel very strongly that this record, "Redemption," is a great product. It's a viable recording, and it needs to be heard by as many people as possible."

Feedback in her hometown has been positive. "The reaction here in Columbia has just been amazing," she says, relating that both the recording and release shows for the CD sold out.

"My hometown loves it. I'm just kind of trying to spread [that enthusiasm]."

"Redemption" offers a tasty sampling of Townsend's deft guitar playing, not to mention the strength that her rich, powerful voice gives to both her own well-crafted lyrics. Bluesy to sassy and sweet to painfully honest, songs on the CD also feature a variety of instruments, from guitar and piano to saxophone and horns.

Out lesbian singer/songwriter Elaine Townsend offers audiences both original songs and unique arrangements of classics. The South Carolina native's new release is *Redemption*.

Townsend says the fact that "Redemption" is a live recording is a special bonus—performance is her favorite portion of the music business.

"The reward is getting on stage. That's the part I love the best," she relates.

INFO

Elaine Townsend
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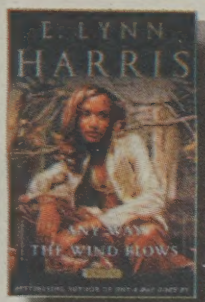
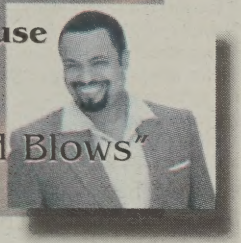


Monday, July 30, 7:30pm
An evening with
E. Lynn Harris
at
The 14th St. Playhouse



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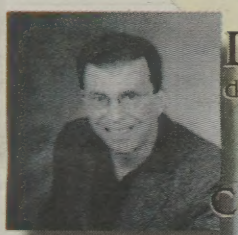
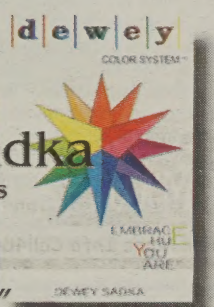


Dewey Sadka
discusses and signs
"The Dewy Color System"
at Outwrite



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out in print BOOK REVIEWS

In queer color

A new book by an out gay author explains how color reveals your true self

by ERIN O'BRIANT

ATLANTA—If you loved the 1980s craze for uncovering the seasonal palette best suited to your coloring and you enjoy taking the quizzes in *Cosmopolitan* magazine, you'd better pick up a copy of **DEWEY COLOR SYSTEM: EMBRACE HUE YOU ARE.**

The book, written by openly gay Atlanta author Dewey Sadka, embraces both genres with fervor. The reader chooses favorite colors that Sadka says correspond to aspects of one's personality: basic motivators, how you relate, who you are, your hopes and fears and more.

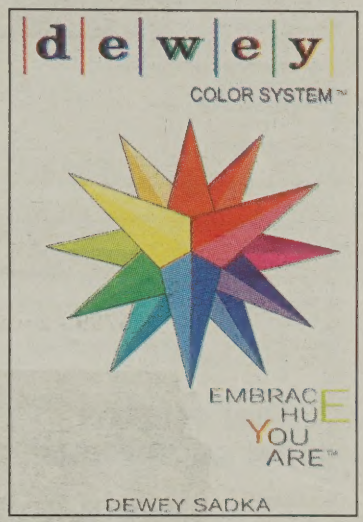
Someone, for example, who chooses blue, orange and black as their preferred colors in the Dewey system may have a "manager" personality. Even more fun, the "manager" can get a friend or lover to use the system to uncover their differences and similarities, even assess their romantic chemistry.

Sadka's theory may sound a little nuts to folks not enamored of astrology or palm reading, but it makes some sense—colors hold meaning for people, so blue-lovers may have a different personality from people who choose red or yellow. "It does work," Sadka insists.

He developed his color system over a period of 20 years, during which he owned a large staffing service. "I was always looking to motivate people around me and to find a correct match for each person with each job," he explains. Sadka says he performed 5,000 color evaluations before writing his book.

He was one of his own subjects. "Color was not initially important in my life," Sadka recalls. "I was very corporate color conservative but after I started studying about color I recognized the power that it has to motivate you. So I started buying colorful clothes and painted all the rooms in my house bright colors."

Sadka says the change in hue has had an enormous effect on his life—and his travel plans.



Openly gay author Dewey Sadka will deliver a colorful reading at Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse Aug. 1.

"I painted my rooms my favorite colors, so when I'm in my house I'm just very passionate and energized," he says. "It's hard for me to not think of how many exciting things I can do because I'm so inspired by my surroundings.

"The weird thing is that when I take a vacation, I miss the colors tremendously," Sadka adds.

His inspiration comes from the thought processes of Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Einstein, Sadka says. He read about them incessantly as a child. "I was always trying to use their thought processes to simplify my life," he explains.

In case readers are worried that the color system could complicate their relationships, Sadka is quick to point out that the point of using his system is to learn more about yourself and the people around you, not to destroy incompatible relationships.

"Go and test your exes and you'll probably find that you date the same colors over and over again," Sadka says. "It doesn't hurt the relationship, it empowers it because understanding the other person's perspective is very bonding. What I get from a lot of couples is giggling."

What the Dewey system does best, though, is help people figure out what they should be doing in life, Sadka says. "Sometimes I talk to people who are doing what they want to do but they're not admitting it," he explains. "They don't know to say this is me, and that's where this book is so powerful."

Readers can find out more from Sadka when he reads from his book at Outwrite Bookstore Aug. 1.

INFO

Dewey Sadka Book Signing
Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse
Aug 1, 7:30 p.m.
991 Piedmont Ave., NE
404-607-0082

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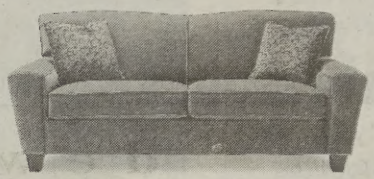

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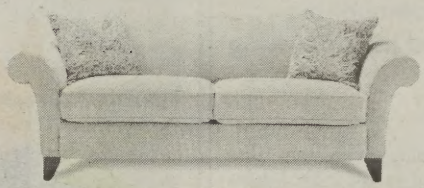

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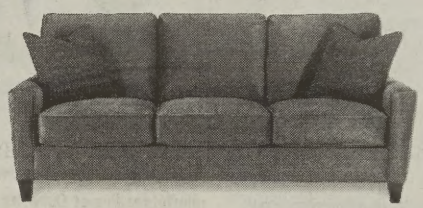

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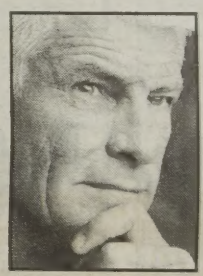

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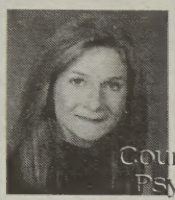

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Remembering a snap queen

Marlon Riggs produced documentaries that exposed racism and homophobia—and infuriated the right wing

by RAWLEY GRAU

Marlon Riggs' documentaries took on issues of racism and homophobia.

One of the leading documentary filmmakers to emerge in the late 1980s, Marlon Riggs dissected issues of racism and homophobia in a number of ground-breaking films, including "Tongues Untied," an exploration of what it means to be a black gay man in America. The film became a major battlefield in the "culture wars" of the early 1990s.

Born in 1957, Riggs was part of a military family. In 1974, Riggs received a full scholarship to Harvard University, where he studied African-American history. He decided to go into documentary filmmaking, he later explained, because he wanted to share what he was learning with as many people as possible.

After graduating from Harvard, he sought his master's degree at the University of California at Berkeley. In 1979, he began living with a white man named Jack Vincent; they soon became lovers. Riggs completed his degree in 1982 and began working on his first feature-length documentary, "Ethnic Notions," an examination of racist stereotypes in popular culture. The 1987 film won numerous awards, including an Emmy.

Around this time, Riggs became interested in making a short film about black gay men. But in December 1988, he suffered kidney failure and almost died. Hospital tests showed he had AIDS. He pulled through, but the concept for the documentary radically changed. "I found that the story would be my life," he later recalled. "I never thought of putting myself before the camera; it was really liberating."

In "Tongues Untied," Riggs interweaves his own experiences with those of others, using poetry, music and provocative imagery to create an intense yet lyrical portrayal of what it's like to be a gay African-American man. The hour-long documentary candidly addressed both racism within the gay community and homophobia among African-Americans.

Completed in 1989, "Tongues Untied" won a number of prestigious awards and was slated to air on PBS. But religious right groups mounted a campaign against televising the film, citing its sexual content and graphic language.

Although PBS still aired the documentary in July 1991, 18 network affiliates refused to broadcast it, while others scheduled it for the wee hours of the morning.

Right-wing politicians denounced "Tongues Untied" as yet another misuse of public funds (Riggs had received a $5,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts) and another reason to shut down the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. "What the hell is going on when the taxpayers are required to fund such garbage as that?" Jesse Helms thundered from the Senate floor.

Pat Buchanan used racy clips from "Tongues Untied" in his presidential campaign ads to illustrate how the (first) Bush administration had "invested our tax dollars in blasphemy and pornographic art."

Riggs continued to explore the black gay experience in three short films, including "No Regrets" (1992), which dealt with AIDS among African-Americans. He also made the feature-length "Color Adjustment" (1991), which told the history of the depiction of African-Americans on television.

In 1992, Riggs began work on "Black Is... Black Ain't," taking up the thorny question of what constitutes African-American identity. But Riggs' health was deteriorating rapidly, and in November 1993 he entered the hospital for a six-month stay. Still, he poured what energy he had into making the film.

Riggs died at home April 5, 1994, surrounded by his family and his partner, Jack Vincent. "Black Is... Black Ain't" was completed by his co-director, who incorporated scenes of Riggs speaking from his hospital bed. Much more than just a study of black identity, the film stands as a moving testament to Riggs' own unflagging search for meaning.

INFO

'Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, & Queer Essays on Popular Culture'
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'Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a Snap Queen'
by Marlon Riggs
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John Cameron Mitchell's 'Hedwig' has been tackled by 10 other performers, including a less-than-successful turn by Ally Sheedy.

'Hedwig' attracting unlikely audiences

➢ Continued from Page 26

father was military commandant, to a German prostitute who babysat his little brother in Kansas.

In addition to David Bowie, he counts among his other influences former Georgian and trans-rocker Jayne County, as well as the New York Dolls.

Mitchell has been particularly excited by response to the film—especially from some of the most unlikely audiences.

"People are surprised when they're not offended," he says. He cites senior citizens and gay men as groups who "don't generally like rock music" but have become fans of "Hedwig."

New Line Cinema, which acquired the film rights before a producer had even been secured, Mitchell feels, is the perfect distributor for "Hedwig & the Angry Inch."

"They started out distributing John Waters' 'Pink Flamingos,' so they've always been pushing the envelope," he points out. It's only coincidental that he appeared in an episode of their "Freddy's Nightmares" series in 1988 and the 1990 film "Book of Love," directed by studio founder and CEO Robert Shaye.

Killer Films ("Boys Don't Cry") signed on to produce and Mitchell expanded the script from a single cabaret performance to a national tour, adding several characters and flashbacks that were only mentioned in the stage show.

Traditionally this is the point at which compromises happen, even in a work that has survived so far as an individual vision. Someone always knows how to increase the box office by adding something to attract a few more people or deleting something that would turn certain potential viewers off.

Mitchell swears that didn't happen in this case, and that New Line was strictly hands-off, even though he was a first-time director. After thinking a moment he recalls one instance when someone from the studio suggested a scene needed some work.

"I was humping a male back-up singer in bed and they felt it was a little harsh," he recalls.

One reason the novice director was given so much freedom is that the film's budget was minuscule by Hollywood standards. More money, Mitchell says, would have made it easier to shoot but might have taken away the creative edge.

"The small budget gave it an urgency" that might otherwise have been lost," he notes. It would have allowed them to license the rights to more existing songs, but because they didn't have the money the creators wrote their own songs.

The initial response to the film version of "Hedwig & the Angry Inch" in screenings at Sundance, Berlin and other prominent film festivals has been tremendous. Although it's being given an "art house" release to begin with, don't be surprised to find it outgrowing those limitations rapidly.

The man behind it all is basking in adulation right now, including the Best Director award from Sundance, and looking forward to other fantasies he'd like to realize.

"I'm going to put acting to rest for a couple of years," Mitchell says. "I mostly want to direct my own stuff right now."

There's obviously a lot he wants to do, but Mitchell's most immediate plans involve two projects, one for children and one for adults. He says he's working with a writer from Athens, Ga., on a script for a children's film in the European tradition.

"It will have music but it won't be a musical," he notes.

As for the adult film, Mitchell has different plans. "I want to do something with explicit sex on screen. I don't know what yet." Asked whether the sex will be gay or straight, he replies, "Both, probably."

"Hedwig & the Angry Inch" fills one fantasy of all actors for Mitchell: It's an annuity role, one he can always re-mount and take on tour when things are slow.

Asked if he can see himself playing Hedwig in his 70s, like Carol Channing taking "Hello, Dolly!" on the road again, Mitchell exclaims, "God help me if I have to do that!"

And unlike Channing, he got to star in the film version.

INFO

'Hedwig & the Angry Inch'
Opens in Atlanta Aug. 3,
New Orleans Aug. 17
www.wotapalava.planetout.com
www.wotapalava.gay.com

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Hooked on bootylicious

Could Destiny's Child be the thinking man's pop group? According to a recent AP news report, "Destiny's Child is introducing the world to a whole new vocabulary with their latest hit, 'Bootylicious.'" The report specifically questioned the meaning behind the lyric "I don't think you're ready for this jelly." What does "jelly" refer to? Well, even the women of Destiny's Child are a little wobbly on its meaning. Beyonce Knowles, Michelle Williams and Kelly Rowland at first agreed that "jelly" is simply another term for "booty." But after some deep thought, the women decided that "jelly" need not refer to a specific body part. "If it's your mind, it's your mind. If it's your eyes, it's your eyes," Rowland told AP. "Whatever makes you feel confident is your jelly." So sharpen those pencils and slip on some daisy dukes, readers, because knowledge can also be your destiny! Just remember to study hard and keep your jelly to the grindstone.

Destiny's Child poses the thought-provoking question: Are you ready for this *jelly*?

Well, isle be damned

Like six weeks of unrelenting sea sickness, "Temptation Island 2" is coming back up this fall. The first series was a predictable ratings winner and easily Fox's highest rated series. The new season will follow the same format as last season: Unmarried couples will fly to an exotic locale before splitting up and being paired with a series of sexy singles. After weeks of dating and flirting, the original couples are faced with the decision to stay together or break up. It's the perfect scenario for what all good Americans wanna see: tight abs, titties and tears! It's hyper-reality programming at its finest! The new season, however, is still only open to heterosexual couples. Gay men and lesbians, count your lucky stars or be pissed, it's up to you. But don't forget, we've had our own little temptation island for years. It's called "Fire."

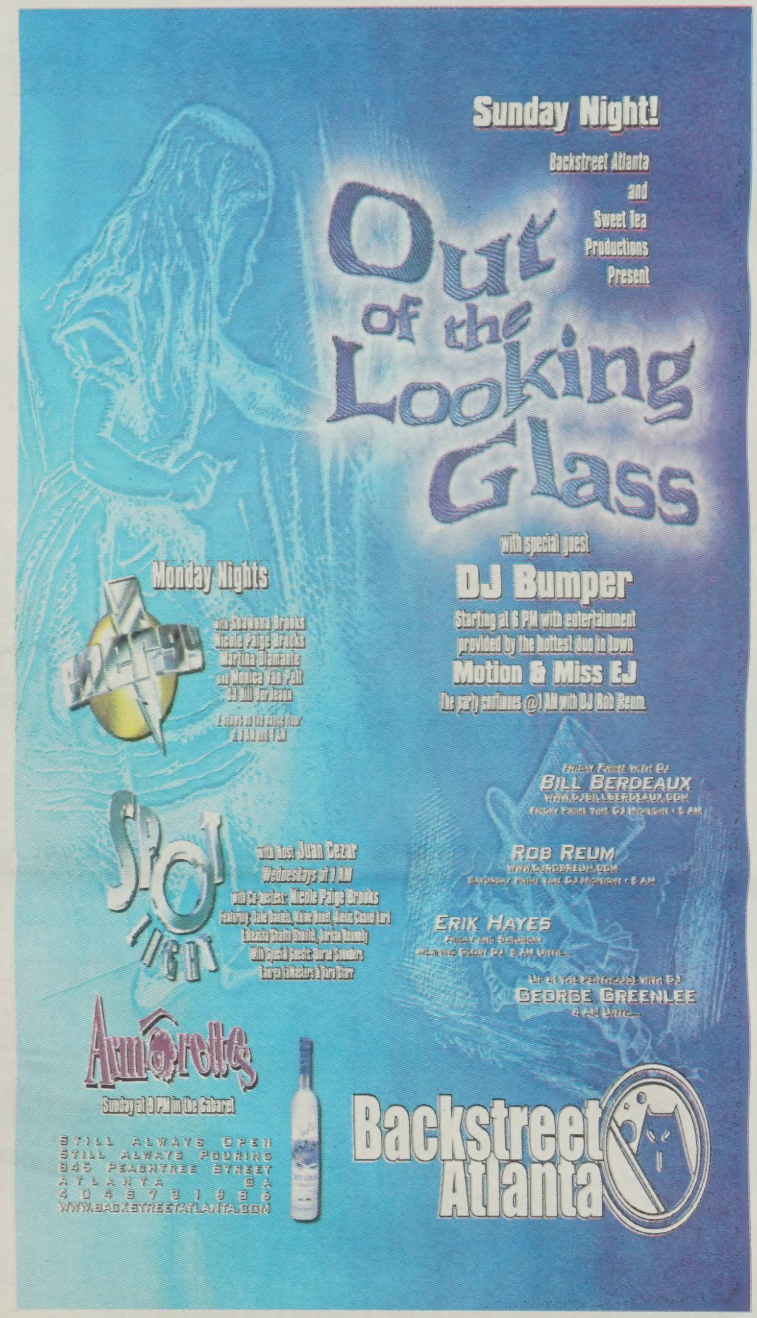
Straight people so crazy: 'Temptation Island 2' returns this fall with more weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.

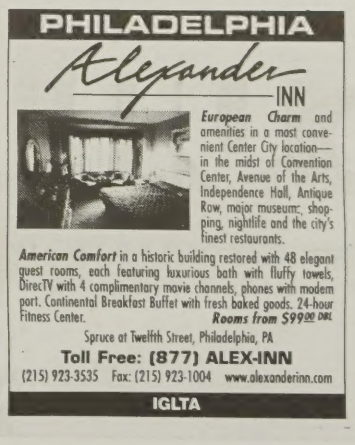
Dancin' around the issue

In a recent interview with USAToday.com's Jeannie Williams, talk-show host Rosie O'Donnell cited her lack of privacy as one of the reasons she'll move to Miami once her talk show ends next year. She finds raising her children difficult in New York, where strangers will approach them and address them by name, forcing her to explain, "Mommy's on TV, she talks about you." As to the tabloid shots of her and "friend" Kelli Carpenter, about whom she announced, "I love you!" at this year's Emmy awards, she will only say, "I live my life, they take pictures when they do. I've never denied or confirmed anything. I've never felt the need to." O'Donnell continued, "They've been taking photos of me and her for many years. I don't think there will ever be some big press conference to announce anything about my private life."

Is she or isn't she? Her fans know the truth: Rosie O'Donnell just wants to be all things to all people.

—Write to Dish@sovo.com

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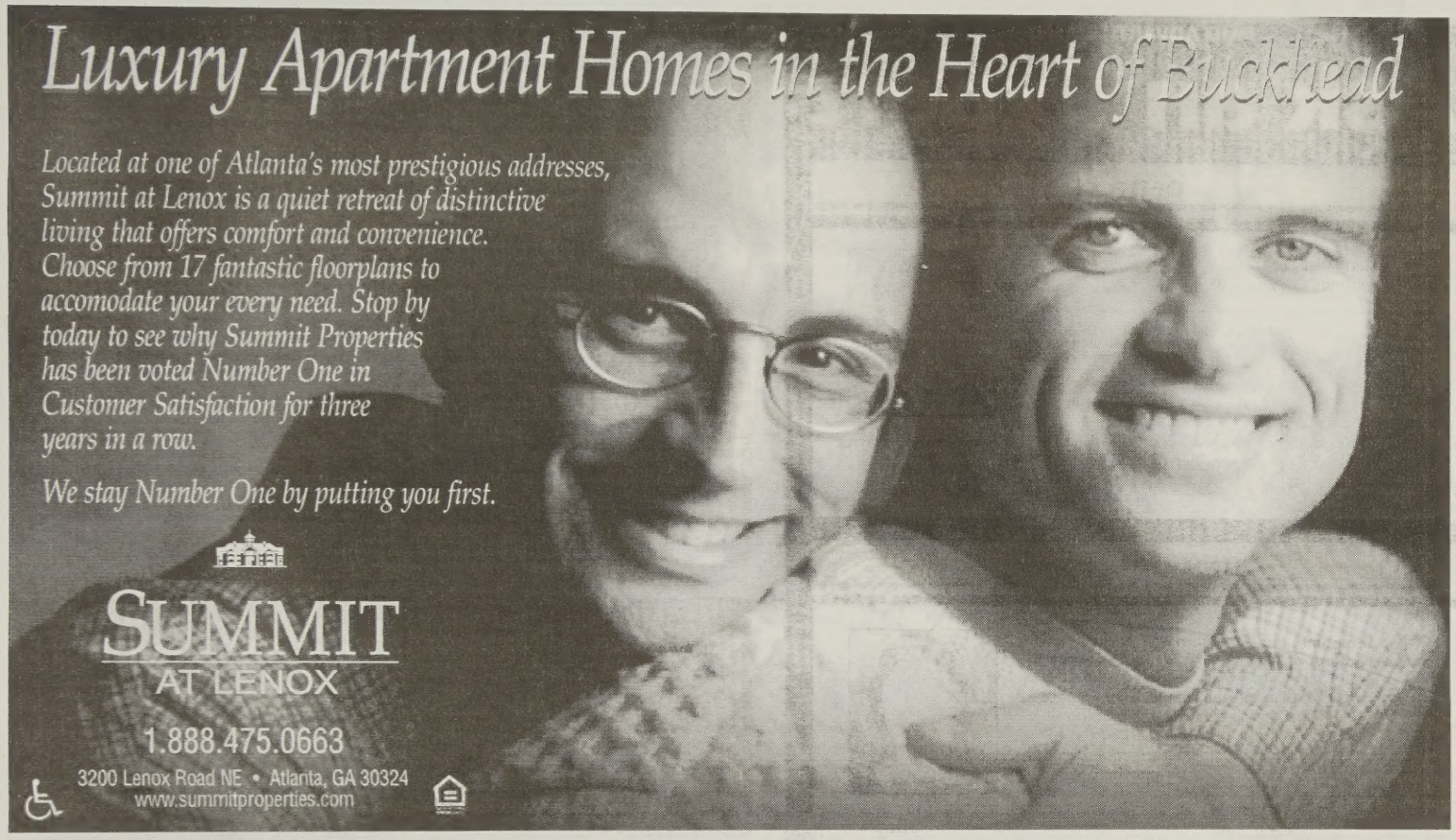

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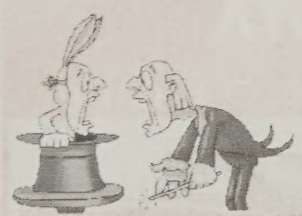

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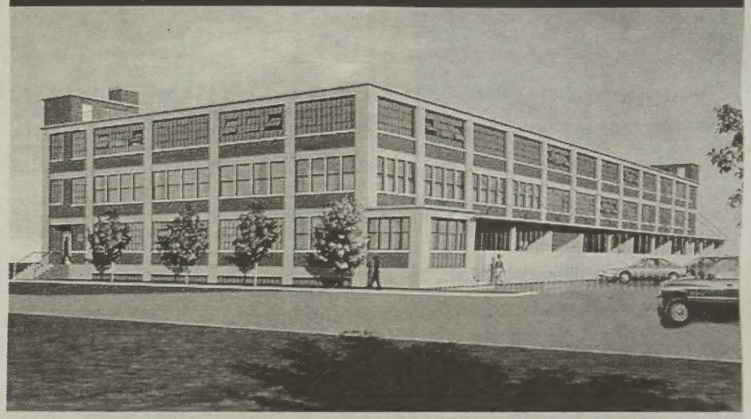

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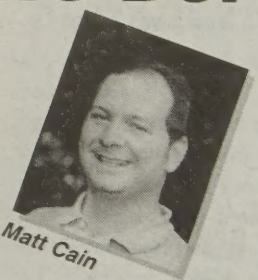

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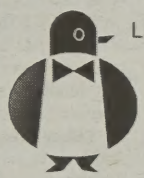

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GARDENER'S GUIDE

The annoying little curse of 'lucky bamboo'

Trendy new houseplant introduces a now-common Southern pest to the Pacific coast

by CADONNA M. PEYTON

Some believe it will make them wealthy. Others hope it will improve their love life. In Asia, lucky bamboo is a symbol of good luck, thought to bring success in business, positive energy and a long and healthy life.

The ornamental plant is now catching on around the United States, from Atlanta, Los Angeles and Chicago to New York and the sidewalks of Savannah, Ga. It's often used in conjunction with feng shui, the increasingly popular Chinese art of arranging one's living spaces to enhance positive energy.

Sold in four, six and 12-inch stalks, lucky bamboo sends out slender green shoots when placed in water like a cut flower. Unlike a flower that wilts away within days, lucky bamboo can continue to grow and thrive in water for years to come.

Steve Davis, 36, said his partner, who works at an Atlanta-area flower shop, bought him some lucky bamboo as a gift recently. "I really like what it stands for—harmony and prosperity," Davis explained. "It gives me a positive outlook on life."

While it may promote some positive energy and pleasing visual aesthetics for your home, shipments of lucky bamboo have recently brought another Asian import, tiger mosquitoes, to Southern California (we've had those in the South for years now).

In Asia the insects have been known to carry viruses that cause serious infections, but no cases of disease transmitted by the mosquitoes have been documented in the United States.

The insect problem began when distributors started shipping by sea rather than air in order to increase volume and reduce costs. But switching to sea deliveries meant the plant must be stored in about two inches of water for about two weeks in cargo containers. That gave previously laid mosquito eggs plenty of time to grow.

As a result, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and local pest-control agencies started using pesticides to treat all lucky bamboo shipments arriving in Los Angeles County.

"I don't think it's much of a concern for people in land-locked areas like Atlanta," says Davis. "We have that breed of mosquito all over the Southeast already anyway. It's certainly no reason to be scared of lucky bamboo, which is something that can totally brighten up your home."

Indeed. In New York City, on a flower-lined block of 28th Street, wholesalers sell lucky bamboo stalks for $5 to $20 each.

In Atlanta, lucky bamboo sells at the Midtown gift and floral shop Twelve for as little as $4 a stalk and as much as $150 for a large bundle. "It's very popular and we sell a lot of it," a store representative explained. "But it's definitely a plant for indoors. It wouldn't survive the winter here."

Lucky bamboo, or dracaena sanderiana, is not actually part of the bamboo family but merely resembles the fast-growing plant. Another positive—this plant requires almost no maintenance. Taking care of it is fairly easy—all you have to do is provide it with clean water. Extremely resilient, it prefers an indoor environment with full or low light—but always avoid direct sun.

'Lucky Bamboo' has become extremely popular with the trendy, innner-city crowd as of late for its purported *good luck energy*.

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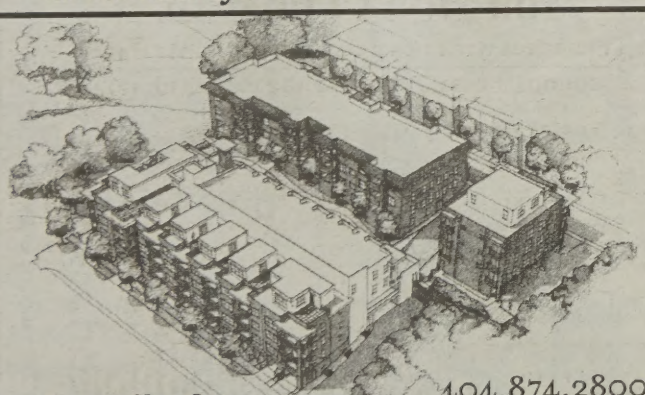

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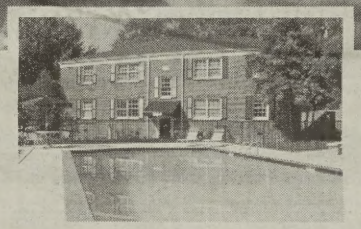

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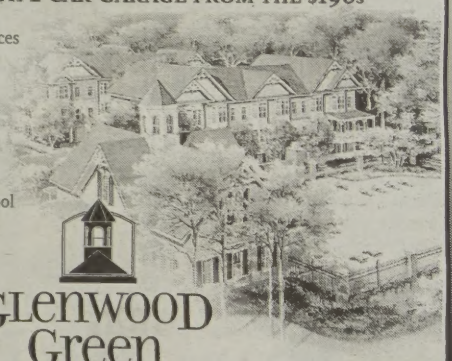

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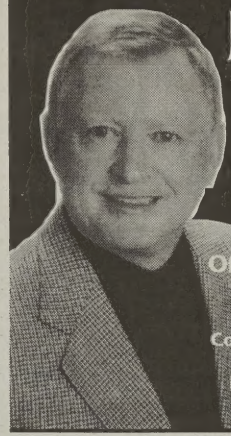

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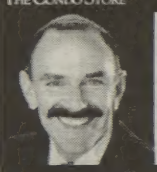

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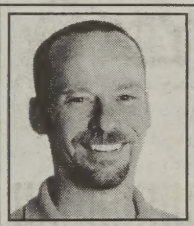

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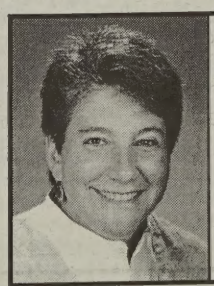

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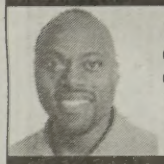

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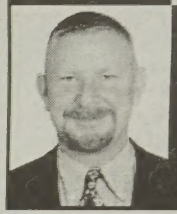

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my stars

by CHARLENE LICHTENSTEIN

July 26 - Aug. 1

The Sun ambles into Leo and we can expect some happy inroads in our personal quests. Life becomes more optimistic and expansive. Not a moment too soon.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)
Wilde romances are possible but it may be a trip to the moon on gossamer wings. (Pack a parachute.) Try something expressive and creative; you're in top form, proud Rambo. How about surfing the Internet instead of scotchin' the rocks?

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)
The impact of Sun in Leo hits home, literally and figuratively, so be prepared to face yourself in the mirror and ask yourself some tough questions. Have you been living life openly? Be free! Be happy! Be yourself! But don't Behave!

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)
Everyday encounters are the stuff of which positive changes are made so be cognizant of the little neighborly things you need to do but may forget. This is also a clear-thinking time. Expand your mind intellectually. Heck, read a book or two.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)
What do you truly value, pink Crab? If you feel trapped by the trappings of life, the Sun in Leo gives you an escape hatch. If you're one of the many deserving, money will be there when you need it. Buddy, can you spare a dime?

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)
Sun in your own sign hands you a ticket to a great new adventure. Proud Lions need room to roam. Check all new fashion statements in the mirror and get going, compadre. There's no time like the present to get up and out.

VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)
Anything that you've repressed and stuffed away in that closet explodes on the scene. Good; the planets demand enlightenment. Problems that remain hidden and repressed lead to compulsions and obsessive behavior. We don't want that, do we?

LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)
Proud Libras need either a change in scenery or a revolution! The pablum that the group think has been serving is beginning to curdle. Seek new friends, new social group directions and greater expectations. Start with the "A" list and work through the alphabet.

SCORPIO (OCT. 24 – NOV. 22)
Clashes with authority figures are unavoidable, especially if you're less than pleased with your current profession and feel stale and bored. The next few weeks brings the revolution to the boardroom. Guillotine! Knit me a rainbow flag, darling!

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)
Open your mind to new ideas and view the world from a different angle. Accept any philosophical changes as part of a learning experience. Yes, even brilliant gay Archers need a nudge in the right direction every so often. Nudge nudge.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)
Feel a volcano erupting? It's simply Sun in Leo throwing some weight around. The old order is no longer comfortable. You need room to breathe and will seek it consciously or subconsciously. Don't resist pink Cap; they lead you to where you should be.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)
Examine the quality of one-to-one relationships, Aqueerian. For those in a feathered nest, use this nice energy to fluff and arrange. For those who ache to sip the waters at another well, you may be tempted to dive in. The secret is to give more than you receive.

PISCES (FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)
Guppies respond in an entirely new way to day-to-day obligations with Sun in Leo. Cast off your chains. Break free from the repressive working patterns of your life. This revolution is an antidote to physical and mental stress. Don't be a casualty.

For entertainment purposes only. For more information on Charlene Lichtenstein, including her new book, "HerScopes: A Guide to Astrology for Lesbians," visit www.AccessNewAge.com/Stargayzer.

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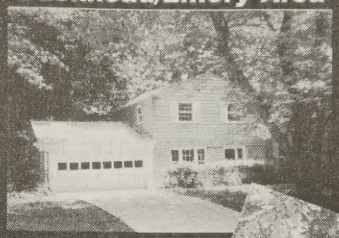

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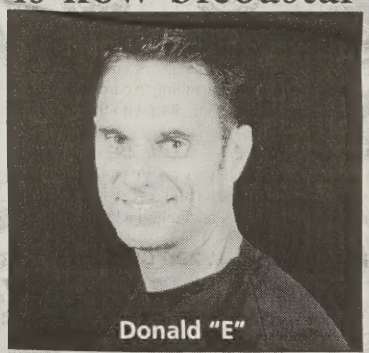

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